

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08176422 1

IKL
Kieffer

Kiester
IKL



THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.



READY FOR THE FRONT.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A DRUMMER-BOY



BY

O.C.

HARRY M. KIEFFER

LATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH REGIMENT
PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS

REVISED AND ENLARGED

Illustrated

Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit
VIRGIL, *Æneid* i. 203

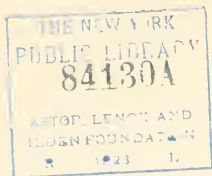


BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Press Cambridge

[Co. 1911]

p. 273



COPYRIGHT, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1909, 1910, AND 1911, BY THE CENTURY CO.

COPYRIGHT, 1888, BY TICKNOR & CO.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATION
MAR 1923

TO
THE OFFICERS AND MEN
OF
THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH REGIMENT
PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS,

And to their Children,

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION.

THE generous words of praise awarded by the press of the country to these *Recollections*, and the widespread favor with which they have been received throughout the land — by none more so than by the veterans themselves, and their children — together with the fact that the book has been long out of print, though much inquired for, warrants the publication of a new and enlarged edition in a different and, it is believed, a greatly improved dress. With the exception of the addition of some recently remembered incidents, which it is thought the reader will enjoy, the narrative remains unchanged. It is hoped that it may continue to give as great pleasure to many readers to peruse these pages as it was to the author to write them.

EASTON, PA., August 1, 1888.

P R E F A C E.

As some apology would seem to be necessary for the effort, herewith made, to add yet one more volume to the already overcrowded shelf containing the Nation's literature of the great Civil War, it may be well to say a few words in explanation of the following pages.

Several years ago the writer prepared a brief series of papers for the columns of *St. Nicholas*, under the title of "Recollections of a Drummer-Boy." It was thought that these sketches of army life, as seen by a boy, would prove enjoyable and profitable to children in general, and especially to the children of the men who participated in the great Civil War, on one side or the other; while the belief was entertained that they might at the same time serve to revive in the minds of the veterans themselves long-forgotten or but imperfectly remembered scenes and experiences in camp and field. In the out-start it was not the author's design to write a connected story, but rather simply to prepare a few brief and hasty sketches of army life, drawn from his own personal experience and suitable for magazine purposes. But these, though prepared in such intervals as could with difficulty be spared from the exacting duties of a busy professional life, having been so kindly received by the editors of *St. Nicholas*, as well as by the very large circle of readers of that excellent magazine, and the writer having been urgently pressed on all sides for more of the same kind, it was thought well to revise and enlarge the "Recollections of a Drummer-Boy," and to present them to the public in permanent book form. In the shape of a more or less connected story of army life, covering the whole period of a soldier's experience from

enlistment to muster-out, and carried forward through all the stirring scenes of camp and field, it was believed that these "Recollections," in the revised form, would commend themselves not only to the children of the soldiers of the late war, but to the surviving soldiers themselves; while at the same time they would possess a reasonable interest for the general reader as well.

From first to last it has been the author's design, while endeavoring faithfully to reflect the spirit of the army to which he belonged, to avoid all needless references of a sectional nature, and to present to the public a story of army life which should breathe in every page of it the noble sentiment of "malice towards none, and charity for all."

In all essential regards, the following pages are what they profess to be,—the author's personal recollections of three years of army life in active service in the field. In a few instances, it is true, certain incidents have been introduced which did not properly fall within the range of the writer's personal experience; but these have been admitted merely as by the way, or for the sake of being true to the spirit rather than to the letter. Facts and dates have been given as accurately as the author's memory, aided by a carefully kept army journal, would permit; while the names of officers and men mentioned in the narrative are given as they appear in the published muster-rolls, with the exception of several instances, easily recognized by the intelligent reader, in which, for evident reasons, it seemed best to conceal the actors beneath fictitious names. While speaking of the matter of names, an affectionate esteem for a faithful boyhood's friend and subsequent army messmate constrains the writer to mention that, as "Andy" was the name by which Fisher Gutelius, "high private in the rear rank," was commonly known while wearing the blue, it has been deemed well to allow him to appear in the narrative under cover of this, his army *sobriquet*.

As no full and complete history of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers has ever yet been written, it is hoped that these Recollections of one of its humblest members may serve the purpose of recalling to the minds of surviving comrades the stirring scenes through which they passed, as well as of keeping alive in coming time the name and memory of an organization which deserved well of its country during the ever-memorable days of now more than twenty years ago.

The author herewith acknowledges his indebtedness for certain facts to a brief sketch of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers by Thomas Chamberlain, late Major of the same; and to John C. Kensill, late sergeant of Company F., for valuable information: and to the editors of *St. Nicholas* for their uniform courtesy and encouragement.

It cannot fail to interest the reader to know that the illustrations signed A. C. R. were drawn by Allen C. Redwood, who served in the Confederate army, and witnessed, albeit from the other side of the fence, many of the scenes which his graphic pencil has so admirably depicted.

With these few words of apology and explanation, the author herewith places THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A DRUMMER-BOY in the hands of a patient and ever-indulgent public.

H. M. K.

NORRISTOWN, PA., March, 1, 1883.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. OFF TO THE WAR	21
II. FIRST DAYS IN CAMP	33
III. ON TO WASHINGTON	44
IV. OUR FIRST WINTER QUARTERS	51
V. A GRAND REVIEW	58
VI. ON PICKET ALONG THE RAPPAHANNOCK	64
VII. A MUD MARCH AND A SHAM BATTLE.	73
VIII. HOW WE GOT A SHELLING	84
IX. IN THE WOODS AT CHANCELLORSVILLE	92
X. THE FIRST DAY AT GETTYSBURG	101
XI. AFTER THE BATTLE	121
XII. THROUGH "MARYLAND, MY MARYLAND"	125
XIII. PAINS AND PENALTIES	135
XIV. A TALE OF A SQUIRREL AND THREE BLIND MICE	145
XV. "THE PRIDE OF THE REGIMENT"	154
XVI. AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE	162
XVII. OUR FIRST DAY IN "THE WILDERNESS"	171
XVIII. A BIVOUAC FOR THE NIGHT	181
XIX. "WENT DOWN TO JERICHO AND FELL AMONG THIEVES"	189
XX. IN THE FRONT AT PETERSBURG	197
XXI. FUN AND FROLIC	211
XXII. CHIEFLY CULINARY	221
XXIII. HATCHER'S RUN	227
XXIV. KILLED, WOUNDED, OR MISSING?	232
XXV. A WINTER RAID TO NORTH CAROLINA	237
XXVI. "JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME!"	243

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

READY FOR THE FRONT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE COMPANY STARTS FOR THE WAR	27
CAMP SCENES	37
TAILPIECE	43
IN WINTER QUARTERS	53
WAITING TO BE REVIEWED BY THE PRESIDENT	59
TAILPIECE	63
IN A DANGEROUS PART OF HIS BEAT	68
THE QUARTERMASTER'S TRIUMPH	79
TAILPIECE	83
GENERAL DOUBLEDAY DISMOUNTS AND SIGHTS THE GUN	87
TAILPIECE	91
A SURGEON WRITING UPON THE POMMEL OF HIS SADDLE AN ORDER FOR AN AMBULANCE	95
ON THE MARCH TO AND FROM GETTYSBURG	103
A SKIRMISH AFTER A HARD DAY'S MARCH	109
AT CLOSE QUARTERS THE FIRST DAY AT GETTYSBURG	115
TAILPIECE	124
I'VE GOT HIM BOYS	130
DRUMMING SNEAK THIEVES OUT OF CAMP	136
TAILPIECE	144
"OLD ABE"	159
TAILPIECE	161
CHRISTMAS EVE AROUND THE CAMP FIRE	165
SICK	167
CAL WIRT'S MAP OF THE WAR	168
A SCENE IN THE FIELD HOSPITAL	175
ARMY BADGES	182
"GENERAL GRANT CAN'T HAVE ANY OF THIS WATER"	185

"WENT DOWN TO JERICHO"	191
ANDY HAD BOUGHT THE SORREL FOR TEN DOLLARS.	195
"BETTER GET OFF'N DAT DAR MULE".	199
FINDING A WOUNDED PICKET IN A RIFLE-PIT	201
SCENE AMONG THE RIFLE-PITS BEFORE PETERSBURG	205
THE MAGAZINE WHERE THE POWDER AND SHELLS WERE STORED.	209
"FALL IN FOR HARD-TACK!"	223
THE CONFLICT AT DAYBREAK IN THE WOODS AT HATCHER'S RUN	229
WRECKING THE RAILWAY	239
THE CHARGE ON THE CAKES	245
THE WELCOME HOME	248

RECOLLECTIONS OF A DRUMMER BOY.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A DRUMMER BOY.

CHAPTER I.

OFF TO THE WAR.

"It is no use, Andy, I cannot study any more. I have struggled against this feeling, and have again and again resolved to shut myself up to my books and stop thinking about the war; but when news comes of one great battle after another, and I look around in the schoolroom and see the many vacant seats once occupied by the older boys, and think of where they are, and what they may be doing away down in Dixie, I fall to day-dreaming and wool-gathering over my books, and it is just no use. I cannot study any more. I might as well leave school, and go home and get at something else."

But my companion was apparently too deeply interested in unravelling the intricacies of a sentence in Cæsar to pay much attention to what I had been saying. For Andy was a studious boy, and the sentence with which he had been wrestling when the bell rang for recess could not at once be given up. He had therefore carried his book with him on our walk as we strolled leisurely up the green lane which led past the "Old Academy," and, with his copy of Cæsar spread out before him, lay stretched out at full length on the greensward, in the shade of a large cherry-tree, whose fruit was already turning red under the warm spring sun. It was a beautiful, dreamy day in May, early in the summer of 1862, the second year of the great Civil War.

The air was laden with the sweet scent of the young clover, and vocal with the song of the robin and the bluebird. The sky was cloudless overhead, and the soft spring breeze blew balmily up from the south. Behind us were the hills, covered with orchards, and beneath us lay the quiet little village of M——, with its one thousand inhabitants, and beyond it the valley, renowned far and wide for its beauty, while in the farther background, deep blue mountains rose towering toward the sky.

My companion, apparently quite indifferent to the languid influence of the season, resolutely persevered at his task until he had triumphantly mastered it. Then, closing the book and clasping his hands behind his head as he rolled around on his back, he looked at me with a smile and said, —

“Oh! you only have the spring fever, Harry.”

“No, I haven’t, Andy; it was the same last winter. And don’t you remember how excited *you* were when the news came about Fort Sumter last spring? You would have enlisted right off, had your father consented. Or, may be, *you* had the spring fever then?”

“I’m all over that now, and for good and all. I want to study, and as I cannot study and keep on thinking of the war all the time, why I just stop thinking about the war as well as I can.”

“Well,” said I, “I cannot. Look at our school: why, there are scarcely any large boys left in it any more, only little fellows and the girls. For my part, I ought to get at something else.”

“What would you get at? You would feel the same anywhere else. There is Ike Zellers, the blacksmith, for example. When I came past his shop this morning, on my way to school, instead of being busy with hammer and tongs, as he should have been, there he was, sitting on an old harrow outside his shop door whittling a stick, while Elias Foust was reading an account of the last battle from some newspaper. I shouldn’t wonder if Elias and Ike both would be

enlisting some one of these days. It is the same everywhere. All people feel the excitement of the war—storekeepers, tradesmen, farmers, and even the women; and we schoolboys are no exception.

“Would you enlist, Andy, if your father would consent? You are old enough.”

“I don’t think I should, Harry. I want to stick to study. But there is no telling what a person may do when he is once taken down with this war fever. But you are too young to enlist; they wouldn’t take you. And you had therefore better make up your mind to stick to school, and help me at my Cæsar. If you want war, there’s enough of it in old Julius here to satisfy the most bloodthirsty, I should think.”

“You will find more about war, and of a more romantic kind too, in Virgil and Homer, when you get on so far in your studies, Andy. But the wars of Cæsar and the siege of Troy, what are they when compared with the great war now being waged in our own time and country? The nodding plumes of Hector, and the shining armor of all old Homer’s heroes, do not seem to me half so interesting or magnificent as the brave uniforms in which some of our older school-fellows occasionally come home on furlough.”

“Up there on the hillside,” said Andy, suddenly rising from his reclining posture, “is cousin Joe Gutelius, hoeing corn in his father’s lot. Let’s go up and see what he has to say about the war.”

We found Joe busy, and hard at work with the young corn. He was a fine young fellow, perhaps twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, tall, well built, of a fine, manly bearing, and looked a likely subject for a recruiting officer, as, in response to our loud “Hello, Joe!” he left his unfinished row, and came down to the fence for a talk.

“Rather a warm day for work in a cornfield, isn’t it Joe?”

“Well, yes,” said Joe, as he threw down his hoe and mounted the

top rail, wiping away the perspiration, which stood in great beads on his brow. "But I believe I'd rather hoe corn than go to school such beautiful weather. Nearly kill me to be penned up in the old academy such a day as this."

"That's what's the matter with Harry, here," said Andy. "He's got the spring fever, I tell him; but he thinks he's got the war fever. I told him we'd come up here and see what you had to say about it."

"About what? About the spring fever, or about the war?"

"Why, about the war, of course, Joe," said Andy, with a smile.

"Well, boys, I know what the war fever is like. I had a touch of it last winter, when the Fifty-first boys went off; and I came very near going along with them, too. But my brothers, Charlie and Sam, both wanted to go, and I declared that if they went I'd go too; and mother took it so much to heart that we all had to give it up. Charlie and Sam came near joining a cavalry company some months ago, and I shouldn't wonder much if they did get off one of these days; but, as for myself, I guess I'll have to stay at home and take care of the old folks."

"And I tell Harry, here," said Andy, "that he had better stick to books, and help me with my Cæsar."

"Or he might get a hoe, and come and help me with my corn," said Joe, with a smile; "that would take both the spring fever and the war fever out of him in a jiffy. But there is your bell, calling you to your books. Poor fellows, how I pity you!"

That my companion would persevere in his purpose of "sticking to books," as he called it, I had no doubt. For, besides being naturally possessed of a resolute will, he was several years my senior, and therefore presumably less liable to be carried away by the prevailing restlessness of the times. But for myself, study continued to grow more and more irksome as the summer drew on apace, so that when, before the close of the term, a former schoolmate began to "raise

a company," as it was called, for the nine months' service, unable any longer to endure my restless longing for a change, I sat down at my desk one day in the schoolroom, and wrote the following letter home. —

"DEAR PAPA, — I write to ask whether I may have your permission to enlist. I find the school is fast breaking up; most of the boys are gone. I can't study any more. *Won't* you let me go?"

Poor father! In the anguish of his heart it must have been that he sat down and wrote: "You may go!" Without the loss of a moment I was off to the recruiting-office, showed my father's letter, and asked to be sworn in. But alas! I was only sixteen, and lacked two years of being old enough, and they would not take me unless I could swear I was eighteen, which, of course, I could not and would not do.

So, then, back again to the school when the fall term opened, early in August, 1862, there to dream over Horace and Homer, and that one poor little old siege of Troy, for a few days more, while Andy at my side toiled manfully at his Cæsar. The term had scarcely well opened, when, unfortunately for my peace of mind, a gentleman who had been my school-teacher some years previously, began to raise a company for the war, and the village at once went into another whirl of excitement, which carried me utterly away; for they said I could enlist as a drummer-boy, no matter how young I might be, provided I had my father's consent. But this, most unfortunately, had been meanwhile revoked. For, to say nothing of certain remonstrances on the part of my father during the vacation, there had recently come a letter, saying, —

"MY DEAR BOY, — If you have not yet enlisted, do not do so; for I think you are quite too young and delicate, and I gave my permission perhaps too hastily, and without due consideration."

But alas, dear father, it was too late then, for I had set my very heart on going. The company was nearly full, and would leave in a few days, and everybody in the village knew that Harry was going for a drummer-boy. Besides, the very evening on which the above letter reached me we had a grand procession, which marched all through the village street, from end to end, and this was followed by an immense mass meeting, and our future captain, Henry W. Crotzer, made a stirring speech, and the band played, and the people cheered and cheered again, as man after man stepped up and put his name down on the list. Albert Foster and Joe Ruhl and Sam Ruhl signed their names, and then Jimmy Lucas and Elias Foust and Ike Zellers and several others followed; and when Charlie Gutelius and his brother Sam stepped up, with Joe at their heels, declaring that "if they went he'd go too," the meeting fairly went wild with excitement, and the people cheered and cheered again, and the band played "Hail Columbia!" and the "Star Spangled Banner," and "Away Down South, in Dixie," and — in short, what in the world was a poor boy to do?

There was an immense crowd of people at the depot that mid-summer morning, more than twenty years ago, when our company started off to the war. It seemed as if the whole county had suspended work and voted itself a holiday, for a continuous stream of people, old and young, poured out of the little village of L—, and made its way through the bridge across the river, and over the dusty road beyond, to the station where we were to take the train.

The thirteen of us who had come down from the village of M— to join the larger body of the company at L—, had enjoyed something of a triumphal progress on the way. We had a brass band to start with, besides no inconsiderable escort of vehicles and mounted horse-men, the number of which was steadily swelled to quite a procession as

we advanced. The band played, and the flags waved, and the boys cheered, and the people at work in the fields cheered back, and the young farmers rode down the lanes on their horses, or brought their



THE COMPANY STARTS FOR THE WAR.

sweethearts in their carriages, and fell in line with the dusty procession. Even the old gatekeeper, who could not leave his post, became much excited as we passed, gave "three cheers for the Union forever," and stood waving his hat after us till we were hid from sight behind the hills.

Reaching L—— about nine in the morning, we found the village all ablaze with bunting, and so wrought up with the excitement that all thought of work had evidently been given up for that day. As we formed in line, and marched down the main street toward the river, the sidewalks were everywhere crowded with people, — with boys who wore red-white-and-blue neckties, and boys who wore fatigue-caps; with girls who carried flags, and girls who carried flowers; with women who waved their kerchiefs, and old men who waved their walking-sticks; while here and there, as we passed along, at windows and doorways, were faces red with long weeping, for Johnny was off to the war, and maybe mother and sisters and sweetheart would never, never see him again.

Drawn up in line before the station, we awaited the train. There was scarcely a man, woman or child in that great crowd around us but had to press up for a last shake of the hand, a last good by, and a last “God bless you, boys!” And so, amid cheering, and hand-shaking, and flag-waving, and band-playing, the train at last came thundering in, and we were off, with the “Star-Spangled Banner” sounding fainter, and farther away, until it was drowned and lost to the ear in the noise of the swiftly rushing train.

For myself, however, the last good by had not yet been said, for I had been away from home at school, and was to leave the train at a way station some miles down the road, and walk out to my home in the country, and say good by to the folks at home; and that was the hardest part of it all, for good by then might be good by forever.

If anybody at home had been looking out of door or window that hot August afternoon, more than twenty years ago, he would have seen, coming down the dusty road, a slender lad, with a bundle slung over his shoulder, and — but nobody *was* looking down the road, nobody was in sight. Even Rollo, the dog, my old playfellow, was asleep somewhere in the shade, and all was sultry, hot, and still.

Leaping lightly over the fence by the spring at the foot of the hill, I took a cool draught of water, and looked up at the great red farmhouse above with a throbbing heart, for that was home, and many a sad good by had there to be said, and said again, before I could get off to the war!

Long years have passed since then, but never have I forgotten how pale the faces of mother and sisters became when, entering the room where they were at work, and throwing off my bundle, in reply to their question, "Why, Harry! where did *you* come from?" I answered, "I come from school, and I'm off for the war!" You may well believe there was an exciting time of it in the dining-room of that old red farmhouse then. In the midst of that excitement, father came in from the field and greeted me with, "Why, my boy, where did *you* come from?" to which there was but the one answer, "Come from school, and off for the war!"

"Nonsense! I can't let you go! I thought you had given up all idea of that. What would they do with a mere boy like you? Why, you'd be only a bill of expense to the Government. Dreadful thing to make me all this trouble!"

But I began to reason full stoutly with poor father. I reminded him, first of all, that I would not go without his consent; that in two years, and perhaps in less, I might be drafted and sent amongst men unknown to me, while here was a company commanded by my own school-teacher, and composed of acquaintances who would look after me; that I was unfit for study or work while this fever was on me, and so on; till I saw his resolution begin to give way, as he lit his pipe and walked down to the spring to think the matter over.

"If Harry is to go, father," mother says, "hadn't I better run up to the store and get some woolens, and we'll make the boy an outfit of shirts to-night, yet?"

"Well — yes; I guess you had better do so."

But when he sees mother stepping past the gate on her way, he halts her with, —

“Stop! That boy can’t go! I *can’t* give him up!”

And shortly after, he tells her that she “had better be after getting that woollen stuff for shirts;” and again he stops her at the gate with, —

“Dreadful boy! Why *will* he make me all this trouble? I *can* not let my boy go!”

But at last, and somehow, mother gets off. The sewing-machine is going most of the night, and my thoughts are as busy as it is, until far into the morning, with all that is before me that I have never seen, and all that is behind me that I may never see again.

Let me pass over the trying good by the next morning, for Joe is ready with the carriage to take father and me to the station, and we are soon on the cars, steaming away toward the great camp, whither the company already has gone.

“See, Harry, there is your camp!” And looking out of the car-window, across the river, I catch, through the tall tree tops, as we rush along, glimpses of my first camp, — acres and acres of canvas, stretching away into the dim and dusty distance, occupied, as I shall soon find, by some ten or twenty thousand soldiers, coming and going continually, marching and countermarching, until they have ground the soil into the driest and deepest dust I ever saw.

I shall never forget my first impressions of camp life as father and I passed the sentry at the gate. They were anything but pleasant; and I could not but agree with the remark of my father, that, “the life of a soldier must be a hard life indeed.” For as we entered that great camp, I looked into an A tent, the front flap of which was thrown back, and saw enough to make me sick of the housekeeping of a soldier. There was nothing in that tent but dirt and disorder, pans and kettles, tin cups and cracker-boxes, forks and bayonet-scabbards,

greasy pork and broken hard-tack in utter confusion, and over all and everywhere that insufferable dust. Afterward, when we got into the field, our camps in summer-time were models of cleanliness, and in winter models of comfort, as far, at least, as axe and broom could make them so; but this, the first camp I ever saw, was so abominable, that I have often wondered it did not frighten the fever out of me.

But once among the men of the company, all this was soon forgotten. We had supper,—hard-tack and soft bread, boiled pork, and strong coffee (in tin cups),—fare that father thought “one could live on right well, I guess;” and then the boys came around and begged father to let me go; “they would take care of Harry; never you fear for that;” and so helped on my cause that that night, about eleven o’clock, when we were in the railroad station together, on the way home, father said,—

“Now, Harry, my boy, you are not enlisted yet. I am going home on this train; you can go home with me now, or go with the boys. Which will you do!”

To which the answer came quickly enough,—too quickly and too eagerly, I have often since thought, for a father’s heart to bear it well,—

“Papa, I’ll go with the boys!”

“Well, then, good-by, my boy! And may God bless you, and bring you safely back to me again!”

The whistle blew “Off brakes!” the car door closed on father, and I did not see him again for three long, long years.

Often and often, as I have thought over these things since, I have never been able to come to any other conclusion than this: that it was the “war fever” that carried me off, and that made poor father let me go. For that “war fever” was a terrible malady in those days. Once you were taken with it, you had a very fire in the bones until your name was down on the enlistment roll. There was Andy, for

example, my schoolfellow, and afterward my messmate for three ever-memorable years. I have had no time to tell you how Andy came to be with us; but with us he surely was, notwithstanding he had so stoutly asserted his determination to quit thinking about the war, and stick to his books.

He was on his way to school the very morning the company was leaving the village, with no idea of going along; but seeing this, that, and the other acquaintance in line, what did he do but run across the street to an undertaker's shop, cram his schoolbooks through the broken window, take his place in line, and march off with the boys without so much as saying good by to the folks at home! And he did not see his Cæsar and Greek grammar again for three years.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST DAYS IN CAMP.

OUR first camp was located on the outskirts of Harrisburg, Penn., and was called "Camp Curtin." It was so named in honor of Governor Andrew G. Curtin, the "war governor" of the state of Pennsylvania, who was regarded by the soldiers of his state with a patriotic enthusiasm second only to that with which they, in common with all the troops of the Northern states, greeted the name of Abraham Lincoln.

Camp Curtin was not, properly, a camp of instruction. It was, rather, a mere rendezvous for the different companies which had been recruited in various parts of the state. Hither the volunteers came by hundreds and thousands, for the purpose of being mustered into the service, uniformed and equipped, assigned to regiments, and shipped to the front as rapidly as possible. Only they who witnessed it can form any idea of the patriotic ardor, amounting often to a wild enthusiasm, with which volunteering went on in those days. Companies were often formed, and their muster rolls filled, in a week, sometimes in a few days. The contagion of enlisting and "going to the war" was in the very atmosphere. You could scarcely accompany a friend to a way station on any of the main lines of travel without seeing the future wearers of blue coats at the car windows, and on the platforms. Very frequently, whole trains were filled with them, speeding away to the state capital as swift as steam could carry them. They poured into Harrisburg, company by company, usually in citizens' clothes, and marched out of the town a week or so later, regiment by regiment, all glorious in bright new uniforms and glistening

bayonets, transformed in a few days from citizens into soldiers, and destined for deeds of high endeavor on many a bloody field.

Shortly after our arrival in camp, Andy and I went to town to purchase such articles as we supposed a soldier would be likely to need,—a gum blanket, a journal, a combination knife, fork, and spoon, and so on to the end of the list. To our credit I have it to record that we turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of a certain dealer in cutlery, who insisted on selling us each a revolver, and an ugly looking bowie-knife in a bright-red morocco sheath.

“Shentlemens, shust de ting you vill need ven you goes into de battle. Ah, see dis knife; how it shines! Look at dis very fine revolver!”

But Moses entreated in vain, while his wife stood at the shop door, looking at some regiment marching down the street to the depot, weeping as if her heart would break, and wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron from time to time.

“Ah, de poor boys!” said she. “Dere dey go, again, off to de great war, away from deir homes, and deir mutters, deir wives, and deir sweethearts, all to be kilt in de battle! Dey will nefer any more coom back. Oh, it is so wicked!”

But the drums rattled on, and the crowd on the sidewalk gazed and cheered, and Moses, behind his counter, smiled pleasantly as he cried up his wares, and went on selling bowie-knives and revolvers to kill men with, while his wife went on weeping and lamenting because men would be killed in the wicked war, and “nefer any more coom back.” The firm of Moses and wife struck us as a very strange combination of business and sentiment. I do not know how many knives and pistols Moses sold, nor how many tears his good wife shed, but if she wept whenever a regiment marched down the street to the depot, her eyes must have been turned into a river of tears; for the tap of the drum and the tramp of the men resounded along the streets

of the capital by day and by night, until people grew so used to it that they scarcely noticed it any more.

The tide of volunteering was at the full during those early fall days of 1862. But the day came at length when the tide began to turn. Various expedients were then resorted to for the purpose of stimulating the flagging zeal of Pennsylvania's sons. At first, the tempting bait of large bounties was presented—county bounties, city bounties, state and United States bounties—some men towards the close of the war receiving as much as one thousand dollars, and never smelling powder at that. At last, drafting was of necessity resorted to, and along with drafting came all the miseries of “hiring substitutes,” and so making merchandise of a service of which it is the chief glory that it shall be free.

But in the fall of '62, there had been no drafting yet, and large bounties were unknown—and unsought. Most of us were taken quite by surprise when, a few days after our arrival in camp, we were told that the County Commissioners had come down for the purpose of paying us each the magnificent sum of fifty dollars. At the same time, also, we learned that the United States Government would pay us each one hundred dollars additional, of which, however, only twenty-five were placed in our hands at once. The remaining seventy-five were to be received only by those who might safely pass through all the unknown dangers which awaited us, and live to be mustered out with the regiment three years later.

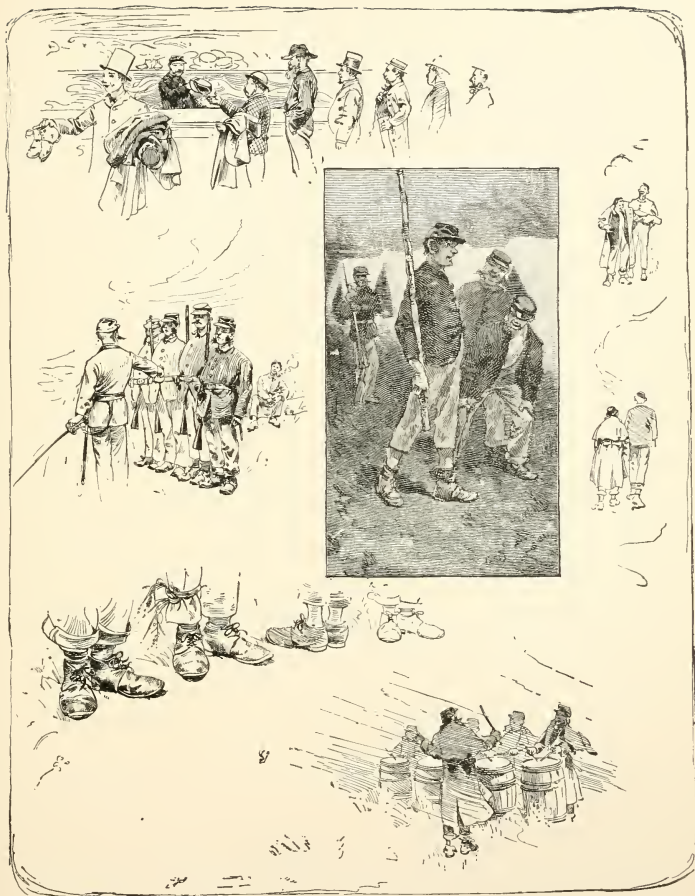
Well, it was no matter then. What cared we for bounty? It seemed a questionable procedure, at all events, this offering of money as a reward for an act which, to be a worthy act at all, asks not and needs not the guerdon of gold. We were all so anxious to enter the service, that, instead of looking for any artificial helps in that direction, our only concern was lest we might be rejected by the examining surgeon and not be admitted to the ranks.

For soon after our arrival, and before we were mustered into the service, every man was thoroughly examined by a medical officer, who had us presented to him one by one, *in purus naturalibus*, in a large tent, where he sharply questioned us — “Teeth sound? Eyes good? Ever had this, that, and the other disease?” — and pitiable was the case of that unfortunate man who, because of bad hearing, or defective eyesight, or some other physical blemish, was compelled to don his citizen’s clothes again and take the next train for home.

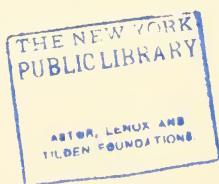
After having been thoroughly examined, we were mustered into the service. We were all drawn up in line. Every man raised his right hand while an officer recited the oath. It took only a few minutes, but when it was over one of the boys exclaimed: “Now, fellows, I’d like to see any man go home if he dare. We belong to Uncle Sam now.”

Of the one thousand men drawn up in line there that day, some lived to come back three years later and be drawn up in line again, almost on that identical spot, for the purpose of being mustered out of the service. And how many do you think there were? Not more than one hundred and fifty.

As we now belonged to Uncle Sam, it was to be expected that he would next proceed to clothe us. This he punctually did a few days after the muster. We had no little merriment when we were called out and formed in line and marched up to the quartermaster’s department at one side of the camp, to draw our uniforms. There were so many men to be uniformed, and so little time in which to do it, that the blue clothes were passed out to us almost regardless of the size and weight of the prospective wearer. Each man received a pair of pantaloons, a coat, cap, overcoat, shoes, blanket, and underwear, of which latter the shirt was — well, a revelation to most of us, both as to size and shape and material. It was so rough, that no living mortal, probably, could wear it, except perhaps one who wished to do penance



CAMP SCENES.



by wearing a hair shirt. Mine was promptly sent home along with my citizen's clothes, with the request that it be kept as a sort of heirloom in the family, for future generations to wonder at.

With our clothes on our arms, we marched back to our tents, and there proceeded to get on the inside of our new uniforms. The result was in most cases astonishing! For, as might have been expected, scarcely one man in ten was fitted. The tall men had invariably received the short pantaloons, and presented an appearance, when they emerged from their tents, which was equalled only by that of the short men who had, of course, received the long pantaloons. One man's cap was perched away up on the top of his head, while another's rested on his ears. Andy, who was not very tall, waddled forth into the company street amid shouts of laughter, having his pantaloons turned up some six inches or more from the bottoms, declaring that "Uncle Sam must have got the patterns for his boys' pantaloons somewhere over in France; for he seems to have cut them after the style of the two French towns, Toulon and Toulouse."

"Hello, fellows! what do you think of this? Now just look here, will you!" exclaimed Pointer Donachy, the tallest man in the company, as he came out of his tent in a pair of pantaloons that were little more than knee-breeches for him, and began to parade the street with a tent-pole for a musket. "How in the name of the American eagle is a man going to fight the battles of his country in such a uniform as this? Seems to me that Uncle Sam must be a little short of cloth, boys."

"Brother Jonathan generally dresses in tights, you know," said some one.

"Ah," said Andy, "Pointer's uniform reminds one of what the poet says, —

" 'Man needs but little here below,
Nor needs that little long.' "

"You're rather poor at quoting poetry, Andy," answered Pointer, "because I need more than a little here below: I need at least six inches."

And the shoes! Coarse, broad-soled, low-heeled "gunboats," as we afterward learned to call them — what a time there was getting into them. Here came one fellow down the street with shoes so big that they could scarcely be kept on his feet, while over yonder another tugged and pulled and kicked himself red in the face over a pair that *would* not go on. But by trading off, the large men gradually got the large garments and the little men the small, so that in a few days we were all pretty well suited.

I remember hearing about one poor fellow, in another company, a great, strapping six-footer, who could not be suited. The largest shoe furnished by the government was quite too small. The giant tried his best to force his foot in, but in vain. His comrades gathered about him, and laughed, and chaffed him unmercifully, whereupon he exclaimed, —

"Why, you don't think they are all *boys* that come to the army, do you? A man like me needs a man's shoe, not a baby's."

There was another poor fellow, a very small man, who had received a very large pair of shoes, and had not yet been able to effect any exchange. One day the sergeant was drilling the company on the facings — Right face! Left face! Right about face! — and of course watched his men's feet closely, to see that they went through the movements promptly. Observing one pair of feet down the line that never budged at the command, the sergeant, with drawn sword, rushed up to the possessor of them, and, in menacing tones, demanded, —

"What do you mean by not facing about when I tell you? I'll have you put in the guard-house, if you don't mind."

"Why — I — did, sergeant," said the trembling recruit.

"You did not, sir. Didn't I watch your feet? They never moved an inch."

"Why, you see," said the man, "my shoes are so big that they don't turn when I do. I go through the motions on the inside of them!"

Although Camp Curtin was not so much a camp of instruction as a camp of equipment, yet once we had received our arms and uniforms, we were all eager to be put on drill. Even before we had received our uniforms, every evening we had some little drilling, under command of Sergeant Cummings, who had been out in the three months' service. Clothed in citizens' dress, and armed with such sticks and poles as we could pick up, we must have presented a sorry appearance on parade. Perhaps the most comical figure in the line was that of old Simon Malehorn, who, clothed in a long linen duster, high silk hat, blue overalls, and loose slippers, was forever throwing the line into confusion by breaking rank, and running back to find his slipper, which he had lost in the dust somewhere, and happy was he if some one of the boys had not quietly smuggled it into his pocket or under his coat, and left poor Simon to finish the parade in his stocking-feet.

Awkward enough in the drill we all were, to be sure. Still, we were not quite so stupid as a certain recruit, of whom it was related that the drill sergeant had to take him aside as an "awkward squad" by himself, and try to teach him how to "mark time." But, alas, the poor fellow did not know his right foot from his left, and consequently could not follow the order, "Left! Left!" until the sergeant, driven almost to desperation, lit on the happy expedient of tying a wisp of straw on one foot, and a similar wisp of hay on the other, and then put the command in a somewhat agricultural shape — "Hay foot, Straw foot! Hay foot, Straw foot!" — whereupon, it is said, he did quite well. For if he did not know his left foot from his right, he at least could tell hay from straw.

One good effect of our having been detained in Camp Curtin for several weeks was, that we thus had the opportunity of forming the acquaintance of the other nine companies with which we were to be joined in one common regimental organization. Some of these came from the western, and some from the eastern part of the state; some were from the city, some from inland towns and small villages, and some from the wild, lumber regions. Every rank, class, and profession seemed to be represented. There were clerks, farmers, students, railroad men, iron workers, lumbermen. At first, we were all strangers to one another. The different companies, having as yet no regimental life to bind them together as a unit, naturally regarded each other as foreigners rather than as members of the same organization. In consequence of this, there was no little rivalry between company and company, together with no end of friendly chaffing and lively banter, especially about the time of roll-call in the evening. The names of the men who hailed from the west were quite strange, and a long-standing source of amusement to the boys from the east, and *vice versâ*. When the orderly-sergeant of Company I called the roll, the men of Company B would pick out all the outlandish-sounding surnames, and make all manner of puns on them, only to be paid back in their own coin by similar criticisms of *their* roll. Then there were certain forms of expression peculiar to the different sections from which the men came, strange idiomatic usages of speech, amounting at times to the most pronounced provincialisms, which were a long-continued source of merriment. Thus the Philadelphia boys made all sport of the boys from the upper tier of counties because they said "I be going deown to teown," and invariably used "I make out to" for "I am going to," or "I intend to." Some of the men, it was observed, called every species of board, no matter how thin, "a plank"; and every kind of stone, no matter how small, "a rock." How the men laughed one evening, when a high wind came up and

blew the dust, in dense clouds, all over the camp, and one of the western boys was heard to declare that he had "a rock in his eye!"

Once we got afield, however, there was developed such a feeling of regimental unity as soon obliterated whatever natural antagonisms may at first have existed between the different companies. Peculiarities of speech, of course, remained, and a generous and wholesome rivalry never disappeared; but these were a help rather than a hindrance. For in military, as in all social life, there can be no true unity without some diversity in the component parts, — a principle which is fully recognized in our national motto, "*E pluribus unum.*"



CHAPTER III.

ON TO WASHINGTON.

AFTER two weeks in that miserable camp at the state capital, we were ordered to Washington; and into Washington, accordingly, one sultry September morning, we marched, after a day and a night in the cars on the way thither. Quite proud we felt, you may be sure, as we tramped up Pennsylvania Avenue, with our new silk flags flying, the fifes playing "Dixie," and we ten little drummer-boys pounding away, awkwardly enough no doubt, under the lead of a white-haired old man, who had beaten *his* drum, nearly fifty years before, under Wellington, at the battle of Waterloo. We were green, raw troops, as anybody could tell at a glance; for we were fair faced yet, and carried enormous knapsacks. I remember passing some old troops somewhere near Fourteenth Street, and being painfully conscious of the difference between them and us. *They*, I observed, had no knapsacks; a gum blanket, twisted into a roll, and slung carelessly over the shoulder, was all the luggage they carried. Dark, swarthy, sinewy men they were, with torn shoes and faded uniforms, but with an air of self-possession and endurance that came only of experience and hardship. They smiled on us as we passed by, — a grim smile, of half pity and half contempt, — just as we, in our turn, learned to smile on other new troops a year or two later.

By some unpardonable mistake, instead of getting into camp forthwith on the outskirts of the city, whither we had been ordered for duty at the present, we were marched far out into the country, under

a merciless sun, that soon scorched all the endurance out of me. It was dusty; it was hot; there was no water; my knapsack weighed a ton. So that when, after marching some seven miles, our orders were countermanded, and we faced about to return to the city again, I thought it impossible I ever should reach it. My feet moved mechanically, everything along the road was in a misty whirl; and when, at nightfall, Andy helped me into the barracks near the Capitol, from which we had started in the morning, I threw myself, or, rather, perhaps, fell on the hard floor, and was soon so soundly asleep that Andy could not rouse me for my cup of coffee and ration of bread.

I have an indistinct recollection of being taken away next morning in an ambulance to some hospital, and being put into a clean, white cot. After which, for days, all consciousness left me, and all was blank before me, save only that, in misty intervals, I saw the kind faces and heard the subdued voices of Sisters of Mercy, — voices that spoke to me from far away, and hands that reached out to me from the other side of an impassable gulf.

Nursed by their tender care back to returning strength, no sooner was I able to stand on my feet once more than, against their solemn protest, I asked for my knapsack and drum, and insisted on setting out forthwith in quest of my regiment, which I found had meanwhile been scattered by companies about the city, my own company and another having been assigned to duty at "Soldiers' Home," the President's summer residence. Although it was but a distance of three miles, or thereabouts, and although I started out in search of "Soldiers' Home" at noon, so conflicting were the directions given me by the various persons of whom I asked the road, that it was nightfall before I reached it. Coming then, at the hour of dusk, to a gateway leading apparently into some park or pleasure ground, and being informed by the porter at the gate that this was "Soldiers' Home," I walked about among the trees, in the growing darkness, in search of

the camp of Company D, when, just as I had crossed a fence, a challenge rang out, —

“Halt! Who goes there?”

“A friend.”

“Advance, friend, and give the countersign!”

“Hello, Elias!” said I, peering through the bushes, “is that you?”

“That isn’t the countersign, friend. You’d better give the countersign, or you’re a dead man!”

Saying which, Elias sprang back in true Zouave style, with his bayonet fixed and ready for a lunge at me.

“Now, Elias,” said I, “you know me just as well as I know myself, and you know I haven’t the countersign; and if you’re going to kill me, why don’t stand there crouching like a cat ready to spring on a mouse, but up and at it like a man. Don’t keep me here in such dreadful suspense.”

“Well, friend without the countersign, I’ll call up the corporal, and he may kill you, — you’re a dead man, any way!” Then he sang out, —

“Corporal of the guard, post number three!”

From post to post it rang along the line, now shrill and high, now deep and low: “Corporal of the guard, post number three!” “Corporal of the guard, post number three!”

Upon which up comes the corporal of the guard, on a full trot, with his gun at a right-shoulder shift, and saying, —

“Well, what’s up?”

“Man trying to break my guard.”

“Where is he?”

“Why there, beside that bush.”

“Come along, you there; you’ll be shot for a spy, to-morrow morning at nine o’clock.”

“All right, Mr. Corporal, I’m ready.”

Now all this was fine sport; for Corporal Harter and Elias were both of my company, and knew me quite as well as I knew them; but they were bent on having a little fun at my expense, and the corporal had marched me off some distance toward headquarters, beyond the ravine, when again the call rang along the line, —

“Corporal of the guard, post number three!” “Corporal of the guard, post number three!”

Back the corporal trotted me to Elias.

“Well, what in the mischief’s up now?”

“Another fellow trying to break my guard, corporal.”

“Well, where is he? Trot him out! We’ll have a grand execution in the morning! The more the merrier, you know; and ‘Long live the Union!’”

“I’m sorry, corporal, but the fact is I killed this chap myself. I caught him trying to climb over the gate there, and he wouldn’t stop nor give the countersign, and so I up and at him, and ran my bayonet through him, and there he is!”

And sure enough, there he was, — a big, fat ’possum!

“All right, Elias; you’re a brave soldier. I’ll speak to the colonel about this, and you shall have two stripes on your sleeve one of these days.”

And so, with the ’possum by the tail and me by the shoulder, he marched us off to headquarters, where, the ’possum being thrown down on the ground, and I handed over to the tender mercies of the captain, it was ordered that, —

“This young man should be taken down to Andy’s tent, and a supper cooked, and a bed made for him there; and that henceforth and hereafter he should beat reveille at daybreak, retreat at sundown, tattoo at nine P. M., and lights out a half hour later.”

Nothing, however, was said about the execution of spies in the morning, although it was duly ordained that the ’possum, poor thing, should be roasted for dinner the next day.

Never was there a more pleasant camp than ours, — there on that green hillside, across the ravine from the President's summer residence. We had light guard duty to do, and that of a kind we esteemed a most high honor; for it was no less than that of being special guards for President Lincoln. But the good President, we were told, although he loved his soldiers as his own children, did not like being guarded. Often did I see him enter his carriage before the hour appointed for his morning departure for the White House, and drive away in haste, as if to escape from the irksome escort of a dozen cavalymen, whose duty it was to guard his carriage between our camp and the city. Then when the escort rode up to the door, some ten or fifteen minutes later, and found that the carriage had already gone, wasn't there a clattering of hoofs and a rattling of scabbards as they dashed out past the gate, and down the road to overtake the great and good President, in whose heart was "charity for all, and malice toward none!"

Boy as I was, I could not but notice how pale and haggard the President looked as he entered his carriage in the morning, or stepped down from it in the evening, after a weary day's work in the city; and no wonder, either, for those September days of 1862 were the dark, perhaps the darkest, days of the war. Many a mark of favor and kindness did we receive from the President's family. Delicacies, such as we were strangers to then, and would be for a long time to come, found their way from Mrs. Lincoln's hand to our camp on the green hillside; while little Tad, the President's son, was a great favorite with the boys, fond of the camp, and delighted with the drill.

One night, when all but the guards on their posts were wrapped in greatcoats and sound asleep in the tents, I felt some one shake me roughly by the shoulder, and call, —

"Harry! Harry! Get up quick, and beat the long roll! We're going to be attacked. Quick, now!"

Groping about in the dark for my drum and sticks, I stepped out into the company street and beat the loud alarm, which, waking the echoes, brought the boys out of their tents in double-quick time, and set the whole camp in an uproar.

“What’s up, fellows?”

“Fall in, Company D!” shouted the orderly.

“Fall in, men,” shouted the captain; “we’re going to be attacked at once!”

Amid the confusion of so sudden a summons at midnight, there was some lively scrambling for guns, bayonets, cartridge-boxes, and clothes.

“I say, Bill, you’ve got my coat on!”

“Where’s my cap?”

“Andy, you scamp, you’ve got my shoes!”

“Fall in, men, quick; no time to look after shoes now. Take your arms and fall in.”

And so, some shoeless, others hatless, and all only half dressed, we formed in line and marched out, and down the road at double-quick, for a mile, then halted. Pickets were thrown out, an advance of the whole line through the woods was made, among tangled bushes and briers, and through marshes, until, as the first streaks of early dawn were shooting up in the eastern sky, our orders were countermanded, and we marched back to camp, to find — that the whole thing was a ruse, planned by some of the officers for the purpose of testing our readiness for work at any hour. After that we slept with our shoes on.

But poor old Peter Blank, — a man who should never have enlisted, for he was as afraid of a gun as Robinson Crusoe’s man Friday, — poor old Peter was the butt for many a joke the next day. For amid the night’s confusion, and in the immediate prospect, as he supposed, of a deadly encounter with the enemy, so alarmed did he become that he at once fell to — praying! Out of consideration for his years and

piety, the captain had permitted him to remain behind, as a guard for the camp in our absence, in which capacity he did excellent service, excellent service! But oh, when we sat about our fires the next morning, frying our steaks and cooking our coffee, poor Peter was the butt of all the fun, and was cruelly described by the wag of the company as "the man that had a brave heart, but a most cowardly pair of legs!"

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FIRST WINTER QUARTERS.

"WELL, fellows, I tell you what, I've heard a good deal about the balmy breezes and sunny skies of old Virginny, but if this is a specimen of the sort of weather they have in these parts, I, for one, move we 'right-about face,' and march home."

So saying, Phil Hammer got up from under the scrub pine, where he had made his bed for the night, shaking the snow from his blanket and the cape of his overcoat, while a loud "Ha, ha!" and an oft repeated "What do you think of this, boys?" rang along the hillside on which we had found our first camping-place on "Old Virginia's Shore."

The weather had played us a most deceptive and unpleasant trick. We had landed the day before, as my journal says, at "Belle Plains, at a place called Platt's Landing," having been brought down from Washington on the steamer "Louisiana"; had marched some three or four miles inland, in the direction of Falmouth, and had halted and camped for the night in a thick undergrowth of scrub pine and cedar. The day of our landing was remarkably fair. The skies were so bright, the air was so soft and balmy, that we were rejoiced to find what a pleasant country it was we were getting into, to be sure; but the next morning, when we drummer-boys woke the men with our loud reveille, we were all of Phil's opinion, that the sunny skies and balmy breezes of this new land were all a miserable fiction. For as man after man opened his eyes at the loud roll of our drums, and the shout of the orderly, "Fall in, Company D, for roll-call!" he found himself cov-

ered with four inches of snow, and more coming down. Fortunately, the bushes had afforded us some protection. They were so numerous and so thick that one could scarcely see twenty rods ahead of him, and with their great, overhanging branches had kindly kept the falling snow out of our faces, at least while we slept.

And now began a busy time. We were to build winter quarters—a work for which we were but poorly prepared, either by nature or by circumstance. Take any body of men out of civilized life, put them into the woods, to shift for themselves, and they are generally as helpless as children. As for ourselves, we were indeed “Babes in the Wood.” At least half the regiment knew nothing of woodcraft, having never been accustomed to the use of the axe. It was a laughable sight to see some of the men from the city try to cut down a tree! Besides, we were poorly equipped. Axes were scarce, and worth almost their weight in gold. We had no “shelter tents.” Most of us had “poncho” blankets; that is to say, a piece of oilcloth about five feet by four, with a slit in the middle. But we found our ponchos very poor coverings for our cabins; for the rain just *would* run down through that unfortunate hole in the middle; and then, too, the men needed their oilcloths when they went on picket, for which purpose they had been particularly intended. This circumstance gave rise to frequent discussion that day: whether to use the poncho as a covering for the cabin, and get soaked on picket, or to save the poncho for picket, and cover the cabin with brushwood and clay? Some messes¹ chose the one alternative; others, the other; and as the result of this preference, together with our ignorance of woodcraft and the scarcity of axes, we produced on that hillside the oddest looking winter quarters a regiment ever built! Such an agglomeration of cabins was never seen before nor since. I am positive no two cabins on all that hillside had the slightest resemblance to each other.

¹ A “mess” is a number of men who eat together.

There, for instance, was a mess over in Company A, composed of men from the city. They had *one* kind of cabin, an immense square structure of pine logs, about seven feet high, and covered over the top, first with brushwood, and then coated so heavily with clay that I am



IN WINTER QUARTERS.

certain the roof must have been two feet thick at the least. It was hardly finished before some wag had nicknamed it "Fortress Monroe."

Then there was Ike Zellers, of our own company; he invented another style of architecture, or perhaps I should rather say he borrowed it from the Indians. Ike would have none of your flat-roofed concerns; he would build a wigwam. And so, marking out a huge

circle, in the centre of which he erected a pole, and around the pole a great number of smaller poles, with one end on the circle and the other end meeting in the common apex, covering this with brush, and the brush with clay, he made for himself a house that was quite warm, indeed, but one so fearfully gloomy, that within it was as dark at noon as at midnight. Ominous sounds came afterward from the dark recesses of "The Wigwam;" for we were a "skirmish regiment," and Ike was our bugler, and the way he tooted all day long, "Deploy to the right and left," "Rally by fours," and "Rally by platoons," was suggestive of things yet to come.

Then there was my own tent, or cabin, if indeed I may dignify it with the name of either; for it was a cross between a house and a cave. Andy and I thought we would follow the advice of the Irishman, who, in order to raise his roof higher, dug his cellar deeper. We resolved to dig down some three feet; "and then, Harry, we'll log her up about two feet high, cover her with ponchos, and we'll have the finest cabin in the row!" It took us about three days to accomplish so stupendous an undertaking, during which time we slept at night under the bushes as best we could, and when our work was done, we moved in with great satisfaction. I remember the door of our house was a mystery to all visitors, as, indeed, it was to ourselves until we "got the hang of it," as Andy said. It was a hole about two feet square, cut through one end of the log part of the cabin, and through it you had to crawl as best you could. If you put one leg in first, then the head, and then drew in the other leg after you, you were all right; but if, as visitors generally did, you put in your head first, you were obliged to crawl in on all fours in a most ungraceful and undignified fashion.

That was a queer-looking camp all through. If you went up to the top of the hill, where the colonel had his quarters, and looked down, a strange sight met your eyes. By the time the next winter

came, however, we had learned how to swing an axe, and we built ourselves winter quarters that reflected no little credit on our skill as experienced woodsmen. The last cabin we built—it was down in front of Petersburg—was a model of comfort and convenience: ten feet long by six wide and five high, made of clean pine logs straight as an arrow, and covered with shelter tents; a chimney at one end, and a comfortable bunk at the other; the inside walls covered with clean oat-bags, and the gable ends papered with pictures cut from illustrated papers; a mantelpiece, a table, a stool; and we were putting down a floor of pine boards, too, one day toward the close of winter, when the surgeon came by, and looking in, said,—

“No time to drive nails now, boys; we have orders to move!” But Andy said,—

“Pound away, Harry, pound away; we’ll see how it looks, anyhow, before we go!”

I remember an amusing occurrence in connection with the building of our winter quarters. I had gone over to see some of the boys of our company one evening, and found they had “logged up” their tent about four feet high, and stretched a poncho over it to keep the snow out, and were sitting before a fire they had built in a chimney-place at one end. The chimney was built up only as high as the log walls reached, the intention being to “catstick and daub” it afterwards to a sufficient height. The mess had just got a box from home, and some one had hung nearly two yards of sausage on a stick across the top of the chimney, “to smoke.” And there, on a log rolled up in front of the fire, I found Jimmy Lucas and Sam Ruhl sitting smoking their pipes, and glancing up the chimney between whiffs every now and then, to see that the sausage was safe. Sitting down between them, I watched the cheery glow of the fire, and we fell to talking, now about the jolly times they were having at home at the holiday season, and again about the progress of our cabin-building, while every now and

then Jimmy would peep up the chimney on one side, and shortly after Sam would squint up on the other. After sitting thus for half an hour or so, all of a sudden, Sam, looking up the chimney, jumped off the log, clapped his hands together, and shouted, —

“ Jim, it’s *gone* ! ”

Gone it was ; and you might as well look for a needle in a haystack as search for two yards of sausage among troops building winter quarters on short rations !

One evening Andy and I were going to have a feast, consisting in the main of a huge dish of apple fritters. We bought the flour and the apples of the sutler at enormous figures, for we were so tired of the endless monotony of bacon, beef, and bean soup, that we were bent on having a glorious supper, cost or no cost. We had a rather small chimney-place, in which Andy was superintending the heating of a mess-pan half full of lard, while I was busying myself with the flour, dough, and apples, when, as ill luck would have it, the lard took fire and flamed up the chimney with a roar and a blaze so bright that it illuminated the whole camp from end to end. Unfortunately, too, for us, four of our companies had been recruited in the city, and most of them had been in the volunteer fire department, in which service they had gained an experience, useful enough to them on the present occasion, but most disastrous to us.

No sooner was the bright blaze seen pouring high out of the chimney-top of our modest little cabin, than at least a half-dozen fire companies were on the instant organized for the emergency. The “ Humane,” the “ Fairmount,” the “ Good-will,” with their imaginary engines and hose-carriages, came dashing down our company street with shouts, and yells, and cheers. It was but the work of a moment to attach the imaginary hose to imaginary plugs, plant imaginary ladders, tear down the chimney and demolish the roof, amid a flood of sparks, and to the intense delight of the firemen, but to our utter con-

sternation and grief. It took us days to repair the damage, and we went to bed with some of our neighbors, after a scant supper of hard-tack and coffee.

How did we spend our time in winter quarters, do you ask? Well, there was always enough to do, you may be sure, and often it was work of the very hardest sort. Two days in the week the regiment went out on picket, and while there got but little sleep and suffered much from exposure. When they were not on picket, all the men not needed for camp guard had to drill. It was nothing but drill, drill, drill: company drill, regimental drill, brigade drill, and once even division drill. Our regiment, as I have said, was a skirmish regiment, and the skirmish drill is no light work, let me tell you. Many an evening the men came in more dead than alive, after skirmishing over the country for miles around, all the afternoon. Reveille and roll-call at five o'clock in the morning, guard mount at nine, company drill from ten to twelve, regimental drill from two to four, dress parade at five, tattoo and lights out at nine at night, with continual practice on the drum for us drummer-boys, — so our time passed away.

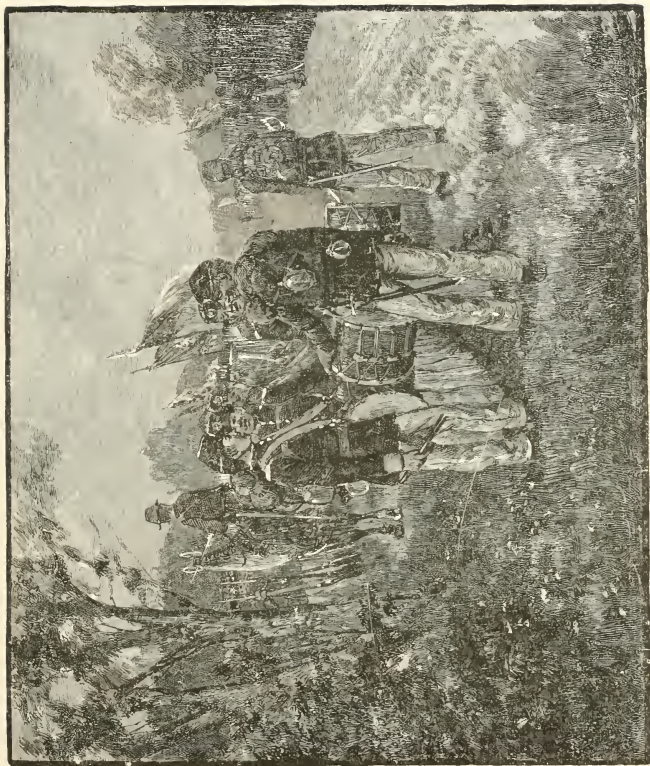
CHAPTER V.

A GRAND REVIEW.

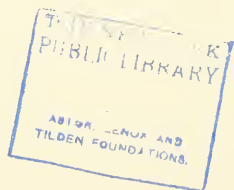
ON a certain day near the beginning of April, 1863, we were ordered to prepare for a grand review of our corps. President Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln, Master Tad Lincoln (who used to play among our tents at "Soldiers Home"), and some of the Cabinet officers, were coming down to look us over and see what promise we gave for the campaign soon to open.

Those who have never seen a grand review of well-drilled troops in the field have never seen one of the finest and most inspiring sights the eyes of man can behold. I wish I could impart to my readers some faint idea of the thrilling scene which must have presented itself to the eyes of the beholders when, on the morning of the ninth day of April, 1863, our gallant First Army Corps, leaving its camps among the hills, assembled on a wide, extended plain for the inspection of our illustrious visitors.

As regiment after regiment, and brigade after brigade, came marching out from the surrounding hills and ravines, with flags gayly flying, bands and drum corps making such music as was enough to stir the blood in the heart of the most indifferent to a quicker pulse, and well-drilled troops that marched in the morning sunlight with a step as steady as the stroke of machinery, — ah! it was a sight to be seen but once in a century! And when those twenty thousand men were all at last in line, with the artillery in position off to one side of the hill, and ready to fire their salute, it seemed well worth the President's while to come all the way from Washington to look at them.



WAITING TO BE REVIEWED BY THE PRESIDENT.



But the President was a long, long time in coming. The sun, mounting fast toward noon, began to be insufferably hot. One hour, two hours, three hours were passing away, when, at last, far off through a defile between the hills, we caught sight of a great cloud of dust.

“Fall in, men!” for now here they come, sure enough. Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln in a carriage, escorted by a body of cavalry and groups of officers, and at the head of the cavalcade Master Tad, big with importance, mounted on a pony, and having for his especial escort a boy orderly, dressed in a cavalry-man’s uniform, and mounted on another pony! And the two little fellows, scarce restraining their boyish delight, outride the company, and come on the field in a cloud of dust and at a full gallop, — little Tad shouting to the men, at the top of his voice: “Make way, men! Make way, men! Father’s a-coming! Father’s a-coming!”

Then the artillery breaks forth into a thundering salute, that wakes the echoes among the hills and sets the air to shivering and quaking about your ears, as the cavalcade gallops down the long line, and regimental standards droop in greeting, and bands and drum-corps, one after another, strike up “Hail to the Chief,” till they are all playing at once in a grand chorus that makes the hills ring as they never rang before.

But all this is only a flourish by way of prelude. The real beauty of the review is yet to come, and can be seen only when the cavalcade, having galloped down the line in front and up again on the rear, has taken its stand out yonder, immediately in front of the middle of the line, and the order is given to “pass in review.”

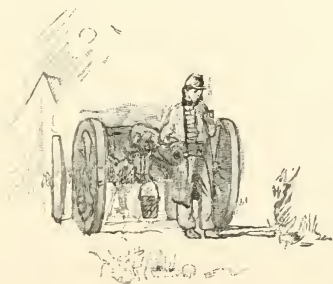
Notice now, how, by one swift and dexterous movement, as the officers step out and give the command, that long line is broken into platoons of exactly equal length; how, straight as an arrow, each platoon is dressed; how the feet of the men all move together, and

their guns, flashing in the sun, have the same inclination. Observe particularly how, when they come to wheel off, there is no *bend* in the line, but they wheel as if the whole platoon were a ramrod made to revolve about its one end through a quarter-circle; and now that they are marching thus down the field and past the President, what a grandeur there is in the steady step and onward sweep of that column of twenty thousand boys in blue!

But once we have passed the President and gained the other end of the field, it is not nearly so fine. For we must needs finish the review in a double quick, just by way of showing, I suppose, what we could do if we were wanted in a hurry,—as indeed we shall be, not more than sixty days hence! Away we go, then, on a dead run off the field, in a cloud of dust and amid a clatter of bayonet scabbards, till, hid behind the hills, we come to a more sober pace, and march into camp, just as tired as tired can be.

How strangely things turn out, and what singular coincidences there are. The boy orderly whom I have here mentioned as accompanying little Tad Lincoln at this grand review, I certainly had no reason to expect ever to see after the war was over, or even to learn his name. But one day, a few years ago, while in camp at Gettysburg with the National Guard of Pennsylvania, in the capacity of chaplain of the Sixth Regiment, a gentleman by the name of William W. Sweisfort came over to our camp with a company of visitors from Philadelphia, and said he wanted to meet me, because I had done him the honor to mention him in my book. Said he, “In your ‘Recollections’ you speak of a boy orderly accompanying little Tad Lincoln at the review of the First Corps near Fredericksburg. Well, sir, I am that boy orderly. I was very young then, and quite small for my years, and, as you see, I have not grown very tall to this day, being short of stature, like Zaccheus of old. I was detailed to take charge of ‘little Tad’ during that visit of President Lincoln, and was respon-

sible to headquarters for his safety. And I tell you I had a time of it. That boy was a lively boy. He kept me moving. He rode his horse half dead, up and down, hither and yon, into every camp, putting his nose into everything, investigated every artillery park; inspected every provision train, hardly slept at night. I believe I was just a little glad when his visit was at an end, and I turned him over to his father in good order."



CHAPTER VI.

ON PICKET ALONG THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

"HARRY, wouldn't you like to go out on picket with us to-morrow? The weather is pleasant, and I'd like to have you for company, for time hangs rather heavy on a fellow's hands out there; and, besides, I want you to help me with my Latin."

Andy was a studious fellow, and carried on his studies with greater or less regularity during our whole time of service. Of course we had no books, except a pocket copy of "Cæsar"; but to make up for the deficiency, particularly of a grammar, I had written out the declensions of the nouns and the conjugations of the verbs on odd scraps of paper, which Andy had gathered up and carried in a roll in his breast pocket, and many were the lessons we had together under the canvas or beneath the sighing branches of the pines.

"Well, old boy, I'd like to go along first-rate; but we must get permission of the adjutant first."

Having secured the adjutant's consent, and provided myself with a gun and accoutrements, the next morning, at four o'clock, I set out, in company with a body of some several hundred men of the regiment. We were to be absent from camp for two days, at the expiration of which time we were to be relieved by the next detail.

It was pleasant April weather, for the season was well advanced. Our route lay straight over the hills and through the ravines, for there were no roads, fences, nor fields. But few houses were to be seen, and from these the inhabitants had, of course, long since disappeared. At one of these few remaining houses, situated some three hundred yards from the river's edge, our advance picket reserve was established, the

captain in command making his headquarters in the once beautiful grounds of the mansion, long since deserted and left empty by its former occupants. The place had a very distressing air of neglect. The beautiful lawn in front, where merry children had no doubt played and romped in years gone by, was overgrown with weeds. The large and commodious porch, where in other days the family gathered in the evening time and talked and sang, while the river flowed peacefully by, was now abandoned to the spiders and their webs. The whole house was pitifully forlorn looking, as if wondering why the family did not come back to fill its spacious halls with life and mirth. Even the colored people had left their quarters. There was not a soul anywhere about.

We were not permitted either to enter the house or to do any damage to the property. Pitching our shelter-tents under the outspreading branches of the great elms on the lawn in front of the house, and building our fires back of a hill in the rear to cook our breakfast, we awaited our turn to stand guard on the picket-line, which ran close along the river's edge.

It may be interesting to my young readers to know more particularly how this matter of standing picket is arranged and conducted. When a body of men numbering, let us say, for the sake of example, two hundred in all, go out on picket, the detail is usually divided into two equal parts, consisting in the supposed case of one hundred each. One of these companies of a hundred goes into a sort of camp about a half mile from the picket-line, — usually in a woods or near by a spring, if one can be found, or in some pleasant ravine among the hills, — and the men have nothing to do but make themselves comfortable for the first twenty-four hours. They may sleep as much as they like, or play at such games as they please, only they must not go away any considerable distance from the post, because they may be very suddenly wanted, in case of an attack on the advance picket-line.

The other band of one hundred takes position only a short distance to the rear of the line where the pickets pace to and fro on their beats, and is known as the advance picket-post. It is under the charge of a captain or lieutenant, and is divided into three parts, each of which is called a "relief," the three being known as the first, the second, and the third relief, respectively. Each of these is under the charge of a non-commissioned officer, — a sergeant or corporal, — and must stand guard in succession, two hours on and four off, day and night, for the first twenty-four hours, at the end of which time the reserve one hundred in the rear march up and relieve the whole advance picket-post, which then goes to the rear, throws off its accoutrements, stacks its arms, and sleeps till it can sleep no more. I need hardly add that each picket is furnished with the countersign, which is regularly changed every day. While on the advance picket-post no one is permitted to sleep, whether on duty on the line or not, and to sleep on the picket-line is death! At or near midnight a body of officers, known as "The Grand Rounds," goes all along the line, examining every picket, to see that "all is well."

Andy and I had by request been put together on the second relief, and stood guard from eight to ten in the morning, two to four in the afternoon, and eight to ten and two to four at night.

It was growing dark as we sat with our backs against the old elms on the lawn, telling stories, singing catches of songs, or discussing the probabilities of the summer campaign, when the call rang out: "Fall in, second relief!"

"Come on, Harry; get on your horse-hide and shooting-iron. We have a nice moonlight night for it, any way."

Our line, as I have said, ran directly along the river's edge, up and down which Andy and I paced on our adjoining beats, each of us having to walk about a hundred yards, when we turned and walked back, with gun loaded and capped and at a right-shoulder shift.

The night was beautiful. A full round moon shone out from among the fleecy clouds overhead. At my feet was the pleasant plashing of the river, ever gliding on, with the moonbeams dancing as if in sport on its rippling surface, while the opposite bank was hid in the deep, solemn shadows made by the overhanging trees. Yet the shadows were not so deep there but that occasionally I could catch glimpses of a picket silently pacing his beat on the south side of the river, as I was pacing mine on the north, with bayonet flashing in the patches of moonlight as he passed up and down. I fell to wondering, as I watched him, what sort of man he was? Young or old? Had he children at home, may be, in the far-off South? Or a father and mother? Did he wish this cruel war was over? In the next fight maybe he'd be killed! Then I fell to wondering who had lived in that house up yonder, and what kind of people they were. Were the sons in the war? And the daughters, where were they? and would they ever come back again and set up their household gods in the good old place once more? My imagination was busy trying to picture the scenes that had enlivened the old plantation, the darkies at work in the fields, and the —

“Hello, Yank! We can lick you!”

“Beautiful night, Johnny, isn't it?”

“Y-e-s, lovely!”

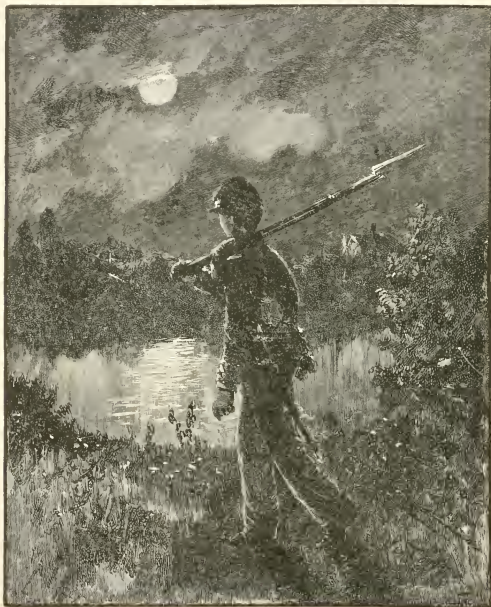
But our orders are to hold as little conversation with the pickets on the other side of the river as necessary, and so, declining any further civilities, I resume my beat.

“Harry, I'm going to lie down here at the upper end of your beat,” says the sergeant who has charge of our relief. “I ain't agoing to sleep, but I'm tired. Every time you come up to this end of your beat, speak to me, will you? for I *might* fall asleep.”

“Certainly, sergeant.”

The first time I speak to him, the second, and the third, he answers

readily enough, "All right, Harry"; but at the fourth summons he is sound asleep. Sleep on, sergeant, sleep on! Your slumbers shall not be broken by me, unless the "Grand Rounds" come along, for whom I must keep a sharp lookout, lest they catch you napping and give you



IN A DANGEROUS PART OF HIS BEAT.

a pretty court-martial! But Grand Rounds or no, you shall have a little sleep. One of these days you, and many more of us besides, will sleep the last long sleep that knows no waking. But hark! I hear the challenge up the line! I must rouse you, after all.

"Sergeant! Sergeant! Get up—Grand Rounds!"

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"The Grand Rounds."

"Advance, officer of the Grand Rounds, and give the countersign."

An officer steps out from the group that is half hidden in the shadow, and whispers in my ear, "Lafayette," when the whole body silently and stealthily passes down the line.

Relieved at ten o'clock, we go back to our post at the house, and find it rather hard work to keep our eyes open from ten to two o'clock, but sleep is out of the question. At two o'clock in the morning the second relief goes out again, down through the patch of meadow, wet with the heavy dew, and along down the river to our posts. It is nearly three o'clock, and Andy and I are standing talking in low tones, he at the upper end of his beat and I at the lower end of mine, when —

Bang! And the whistle of a ball is heard overhead among the branches. Springing forward at once by a common impulse, we get behind the shelter of a tree, run out our rifles, and make ready to fire.

"You watch up river, Harry," whispers Andy, "and I'll watch down; and if you see him trying to handle his ramrod, let him have it, and don't miss him."

But apparently Johnny is in no hurry to load up again, and likes the deep shadow of his tree too well to walk his beat any more, for we wait impatiently for a long while and see nothing of him. By and by we hear him calling over, — "I say, Yank!"

"Well, Johnny?"

"If you won't shoot, I won't."

"Rather late in the morning to make such an offer, isn't it? Didn't you shoot just now?"

"You see, my old gun went off by accident."

"That's a likely yarn o' yours, Johnny!"

"But it's an honest fact, any way."

“Well, Johnny, next time your gun’s going to go off in that uncomfortable way, you will oblige us chaps over here by holding the muzzle down toward Dixie, or somebody’ll turn up his toes to the daisies before morning yet.”

“All right, Yank,” said Johnny, stepping out from behind his tree into the bright moonlight like a man, “but we can lick you, any way!”

“Andy, do you think that fellow’s gun went off by accident, or was the rascal trying to hurt somebody?”

“I think he’s honest in what he says, Harry. His gun might have gone off by accident. There’s no telling, though; he’ll need a little watching, I guess.”

But Johnny paces his beat harmlessly enough for the remainder of the hour, singing catches of song, and whistling the airs of Dixie, while we pace ours as leisurely as he, but, with a wholesome regard for guns that go off so easily of themselves, we have a decided preference for the dark shadows, and are cautious lest we linger too long on those parts of our several beats where the bright moonbeams lie.

It must not be supposed that the sentries of the two armies were forever picking one another off whenever opportunity offered; for what good did it do to murder each other in cold blood? It only wasted powder, and did not forward the issue of the great conflict at all. Except at times immediately before or after a battle, or when there was some specially exciting reason for mutual defiance, the pickets were generally on friendly terms, conversed freely about the news of the day, exchanged newspapers, coffee, and tobacco, swapped knives, and occasionally had a friendly game of cards together. Sometimes, however, picket duty was but another name for sharpshooting and bushwhacking of the most dangerous and deadly sort.

When we had been relieved, and got back to our little bivouac under the elms on the lawn, and sat down there to discuss the episode of the night, I asked Andy, —

“What was that piece of poetry you read to me the other day, about a picket being shot? It was something about ‘All quiet along the Potomac to-night.’ Do you remember the words well enough to repeat it?”

“Yes, I committed it to memory, Harry; and if you wish, I’ll recite it for your benefit. We’ll just imagine ourselves back in the dear old Academy again, and that it is ‘declamation-day,’ and my name is called, and I step up and declaim, —

“ALL QUIET ALONG THE POTOMAC TO-NIGHT.

“ALL quiet along the Potomac, they say,
Except, now and then, a stray picket
Is shot, as he walks on his beat to and fro,
By a rifleman hid in the thicket.
’Tis nothing — a private or two, now and then,
Will not count in the news of the battle;
Not an officer lost — only one of the men,
Moaning out, all alone, the death-rattle.

“All quiet along the Potomac to-night,
Where the soldiers lie peacefully dreaming;
Their tents, in the rays of the clear autumn moon,
O’er the light of the watch-fires are gleaming.
A tremulous sigh of the gentle night wind
Through the forest leaves softly is creeping,
While stars up above, with their glittering eyes,
Keep guard, for the army is sleeping.

“There’s only the sound of the lone sentry’s tread,
As he tramps from the rock to the fountain,
And thinks of the two, in the low trundle bed,
Far away in the cot on the mountain.
His musket falls slack — his face, dark and grim,
Grows gentle with memories tender,
As he mutters a prayer for the children asleep —
For their mother — may Heaven defend her!

“He passes the fountain, the blasted pine tree —
His footstep is lagging and weary ;
Yet onward he goes, through the broad belt of light,
Toward the shades of the forest so dreary.
Hark! was it the night wind that rustled the leaves?
Was it the moonlight so wondrously flashing?
It looked like a rifle — ‘Ha! Mary, good by!’
And the life blood is ebbing and plashing!

“All quiet along the Potomac to-night —
No sound save the rush of the river:
While soft falls the dew on the face of the dead, —
The picket’s off duty forever!”

CHAPTER VII.

A MUD MARCH AND A SHAM BATTLE.

WE had been quietly lying in our winter quarters there at Belle Plains some two months and more, without having yet had much to vary the dull monotony of a soldier's everyday life. There was, of course, plenty of work in the way of picket duty and endless drilling, and no lack of fun in the camp, of one kind or other; but of all this we gradually wearied, and began to long for something new. Not that we were especially anxious for the fatigues of the march and the stirring scenes of the battlefield (of all which we were so far blissfully ignorant): we simply felt that we were tired of the monotony of camp life, and, knowing that great things were before us, with all the ardor of young men for strange experiences and new adventures, we gradually became more and more anxious for the campaign to open. Alas! we knew not what it was we wished for; for when this celebrated campaign of '63 was ended, the few of us who remained to build our second winter quarters had seen quite enough of marching and fighting to last us the rest of our natural days.

However, it was with feelings of relief that we suddenly received orders for the march early in the afternoon of Monday, April 20. As good luck would have it, Andy and I had just finished a hearty meal, consisting in the main of apple-fritters; for by this time we had repaired our chimney, which had been destroyed by the fire, and had several times already prepared our fritters without burning our house down over our heads in the operation. Having finished our meal, we were lying lazily back against our knapsacks, disputing as to whose turn it was to wash the dishes, when Andy, hearing some outcry which

I had not noticed, suddenly leaped out of the little door in the side of our cabin into the company street, exclaiming as he did so, —

“What’s that sergeant? What’s up?”

“Orders to move, that’s all, my boy,” said the sergeant. “Orders to move. Pack up immediately.”

“Where are we going?” queried a dozen voices in chorus; for the news spread like fire in a clearing, and the boys came tumbling out of their cabins pell-mell and gathered about the sergeant in a group.

“You tell me, and I’ll tell you,” answered the sergeant, with a shrug of his shoulders, as he shouted, —

“Pack up immediately, men! We go in light marching order. No knapsacks; only a shelter or a gum blanket, and three days’ rations in your haversacks; and be lively now!”

It was not long before we were all ready, with our thirty hard tack, a piece of pork, and a little coffee and sugar in our haversacks, and our gum blankets or shelters rolled and twisted into a shape somewhat resembling an immense horse collar, slung over the shoulder diagonally across the body, as was universally the custom with the troops when knapsacks were to be dispensed with in winter, or had been thrown away in summer. We drummer-boys, tightening our drums and tuning them up with a tap-tap-tap of the drumstick, took station on the parade ground up on the hill, awaiting the adjutant’s signal to beat the assembly. At the first tap of our drums the whole regiment, in full view below us, poured out of quarters, like ants tumbling out of their hill when disturbed by the thrust of a stick. As the men fell into line and marched by companies up the hill to the parade ground where the regiment was ordinarily formed, cheer upon cheer went up; for the monotony of camp life was now plainly at an end, and we were at last to be up and doing, though where, or how, or what, no one could tell.

When a drumhead is wet, it at once loses all its peculiar charm

and power. On the present occasion our drumheads were soon soaked, for it was raining hard. So, unloosening the ropes, we slung our useless sheepskins over our shoulders, as the order was given, "Forward — route-step — march!" The order "route-step" was always a welcome and a merciful command, and the reader must bear in mind that troops on the march always go by the "route-step." They march usually four abreast, indeed, but make no effort to keep step; for marching in that way, though good enough for a mile or two on parade, would soon become intolerable if kept up for any great distance. In "route-step" each man picks his way, selecting his steps at his pleasure, and carrying or shifting his arms at his convenience. Even then, marching is no easy matter, especially when it is raining, and you are marching over a clay soil, — and it did seem to us that the soil about Belle Plains was the toughest and most slippery clay in the world, at least in the roads that wound, serpent-like, around the hills amongst which we were marching, where, as we well knew, many a poor mule during the winter had stuck fast, and had to be literally pulled out or left to die in his tracks after the harness had been ripped off his back.

At first, however, we had tolerable marching, for we took across the fields, and kept well upon the high ground as long as we could. We passed some good farms and comfortable-looking houses, where we should have liked to stop and buy bread and butter, or get "hoeecake" and milk; but there was no time for that, for we made no halt longer than was necessary to allow the rear to "close up," and then were up and away again at a swift pace.

The afternoon wore on. Night set in, and we began to wonder, in all the simplicity of new troops, whether Uncle Sam expected us to march all night, as well as all day? To make matters still worse, as night fell, dark and drizzling, we left the high ground and came out on the main road of those regions, — and if we never before knew

what Virginia mud was like, we knew it then. It was not only knee deep, but also so sticky, that when you set one foot down you could scarcely pull the other out. As for myself, I found my side-arms (if, indeed, they merited the name) a provoking incumbrance. Drummer-boys carried no arms except a straight, thin sword, fastened to a broad leathern belt about the waist. Of this we had been in the outstart quite proud, and had kept it polished with great care. However, this "toad-sticker," as we were pleased to call it, on this mud march caused each of us drummer-boys a world of trouble, and well illustrated the saying that "pride goeth before a fall." For as we groped about in the darkness, and slid and plunged about in the mud, this miserable sword was forever getting tangled up with the wearer's legs, so that, before he was aware of it, down he went on his face in the mud. My own weapon gave me so many falls that night, that I was quite out of conceit with it. When we reached camp, after this march was done, I handed it to the quartermaster, agreeing to pay the price of it thrice over rather than carry it any more. The rest of the drummer-boys, I believe, carried theirs as far as Chancellorsville, and there solemnly hung them up on an oak-tree, where they are unto this day if nobody has found them and carried them off as trophies of war.

We had a little darkey along with us on this march, who had an experience which was quite as provoking to him as it was amusing to us. The darkey's name was Bill. Other name he had none, except "Shorty," which had been given him by the boys because of his remarkably short stature. For although he was as strong as a man, and quite as old featured, he was nevertheless so dwarfed in size that the name Shorty seemed to become him better than his original name of Bill. Well, Shorty had been employed by one of our captains as cook, or, as seemed more likely on the present occasion, as a sort of sumpter-mule. For the captain, having an eye to comfort on the march, had loaded the poor darkey with a pack of blankets, tents, pans,

kettles, and general camp equipage, so large and bulky that it is no exaggeration to say that Shorty's pack was quite as large as himself. All along it had been a wonder to us how he had managed to pull through so far with all that immense bundle on his back; but, with strength far beyond his size, he had trudged doggedly on at the captain's heels, over hill and through field, until we came at nightfall to the main road. There, like many another sumpter-mule, he stuck fast in the mud, so that, puff and pull as he might, he could not pull either foot out, and had to be dragged out by two men, to the great merriment of all who, in the growing darkness, were aware of Shorty's misfortune.

At length it became so dark that no one was able to see an inch before his face, and we lost the road. Torches were then lighted, in order to find it. Then we forded a creek, and then on and on we went, till at length we were allowed to halt, and fall out on either side of the road into a last year's cornfield, to "make fires and cook coffee."

To make a fire was a comparatively easy matter, notwithstanding the rain; for some one or other always had matches, and there were plenty of rails at hand, and these were dry enough when split open with a hatchet or an axe. In a few moments the fence around the cornfield was carried off, rail by rail, and everywhere was heard the sound of axes and hatchets, the premonitory symptoms of roaring camp-fires, which were soon everywhere blazing along the road.

"Harry," said Lieutenant Dougal, "I haven't any tin cup, and when you get your coffee cooked, I believe I'll share it with you; may I?"

"Certainly, lieutenant. But where shall I get water to make the coffee with? It's so dark that nobody can see how the land lies, so as to find a spring."

Without telling the lieutenant what I did, I scooped up a tin cup full of water (whether clear or muddy I could not tell; it was too

dark to see) out of a corn furrow. I had the less hesitation in doing so because I found all the rest were doing the same, and I argued, that if they could stand it, why I could too—and so could the lieutenant. Tired and wet and sleepy as I was, I could not help but be sensible of the strange, weird appearance the troops presented, as, coming out of the surrounding darkness, I faced the brilliant fires with groups of busy men about them. There they sat, squatting about the fires, each man with his quart tin cup suspended on one end of his iron ramrod or on some convenient stick, and each eager and impatient to be the first to bring his cup to the boiling-point. Thrusting my cup in amongst the dozen others already smoking amid the crackling flames, I soon had the pleasure of seeing the foam rise to the surface,—a sure indication that my coffee was nearly done. When the lieutenant and I had finished drinking it, I called his attention to the half inch of mud in the bottom of the cup, and asked him how he liked coffee made out of water taken from a last year's corn furrow? "First rate," he replied, as he took out his tobacco pouch and pipe for a smoke. "First rate; gives it the real old 'Virginny' flavor, you see."

We were not permitted, however, to enjoy the broad glare of our fires very long after our coffee was disposed of, for we soon heard the command to "fall in" coming down the line. It was now half-past eleven o'clock, and away we went again slap-dash, in the thick darkness and bottomless mud. At three o'clock in the morning, during a brief halt, I fell asleep while sitting on my drum, and tumbled over into the road from sheer exhaustion. Partly aroused by my fall, I spread out my shelter on the road where the mud seemed the shallowest, and lay down to sleep, chilled to the bone and shivering like an aspen.

At six o'clock we were roused up, and a pretty appearance we presented too, for every man was covered with mud from neck to heel.

However, daylight having now come to our assistance, we marched on in merrier mood in the direction of Port Royal, a place or village on the Rappahannock, some thirty miles below Fredericksburg, and reached our destination about ten o'clock that forenoon.

As we emerged from the woods and came out into the open fields, with the river in full view about a fourth of a mile in front, we fully



THE QUARTERMASTER'S TRIUMPH.

believed that now, at last, we were to go at once into battle. And so, indeed, it seemed, as the long column halted in a cornfield a short distance from the river, and the pontoon trains came up, and the pioneers were sent forward to help lay the bridges, and signal-flags began flying, and officers and orderlies began to gallop gayly over the field — of course we were now about to go into our first battle.

“I guess we'll have to cross the river, Harry,” said Andy, as we

stood together beside a corn shock and watched the men putting down the pontoons, "and then we'll have to go in on 'em and gobble 'em up."

"Yes; gobbling up is all right. But suppose that over in the woods yonder, on the other side the river, there might happen to be a lot of Johnnies watching us, and all ready to sweep down on us and gobble *us* up, while we are crossing the river — eh? That wouldn't be nearly so nice, would it?"

"Hah!" exclaimed Andy, "I'd just like to see 'em do it once! Look there! There come the boys that'll take the Johnnies through the brush!"

Looking in the direction in which Andy was pointing, that is, away to the skirt of the woods in our rear, I beheld a battery of artillery coming up at full gallop toward us and making straight for the river.

"Just you wait, now," said Andy, with a triumphant snap of his fingers, "till you hear those old bull dogs begin to bark, and you'll see the Johnnies get up and dust!"

As the battery came near the spot where we were standing, and could be plainly seen, I exclaimed, —

"Why, Andy, I don't believe those dogs can bark at all! Don't you see? They are wooden logs covered over with black gum blankets and mounted on the front wheels of wagons, and — as sure as you're alive — it's our quartermaster on his gray horse in command of the battery!"

"Well, I declare!" said Andy, with a look of mingled surprise and disappointment.

There was no disputing the fact. Dummies they were, those cannon which Andy had so exultingly declared were to take the Johnnies through the brush; and we began at once to suspect that this whole mud march was only a miserable ruse, or feint of war, got

up expressly for the purpose of deceiving the enemy and making him believe that the whole Union army was there in full force, when such was by no means the case. So there was not going to be any battle after all, then? Such indeed, as we learned a little later in the day, was the true state of things. Nevertheless, the pioneers went on with their work of putting down the pontoon boats for a bridge, and our gallant quartermaster, on his bobtail gray, with drawn sword, and shouting out his commands like a veritable major-general, swept by us with his battery of wooden guns, and then away out into the field like a whirlwind, apparently bent on the most bloody work imaginable. Now the battery would dash up and unlimber and get into position here; then away on a gallop across the field and go into position there; while the quartermaster would meanwhile swing his sword and shout himself hoarse, as if in the very crisis of a battle.

It was, then, all, alas! a ruse, and there wouldn't be any battle after all! I think the general feeling among the men was one of disappointment, when about nine o'clock that night we were all withdrawn from the river side under cover of darkness, and bivouacked in the woods to our rear, where we were ordered to make as many and as large fires as we could, so as to attract the enemy's attention, and make him believe that the whole Army of the Potomac was concentrating at that point; whereas the truth was that, instead of making any movement thirty miles *below* Fredericksburg, the Union army, ten days later, crossed the river thirty miles *above* Fredericksburg, and met the enemy at Chancellorsville.

But I have never forgotten our gallant quartermaster, and what a fine appearance he made as the commanding officer of a battery of artillery. It was an amusing sight; for the reader must remember that a quartermaster, having to do only with army supplies, was a non-combatant, that is to say, he did no fighting, and in most cases "stayed by the stuff" among his army wagons, which were usually far enough

to the rear in time of battle. Thinking of this little episode on our first mud march, there comes to my mind a conversation I recently had with a gentleman, my neighbor, who was also a quartermaster in the Union army.

"I was down in Virginia on business last spring," said the ex-quartermaster, "in the neighborhood of Warrenton. (You remember Warrenton? Fine country down there.) And I found the people very kind and friendly, and inclined to forget the late unpleasantness. Well, one man came up to me, and says he, —

"Major, you were in the war, weren't you?"

"Yes," said I, "I was; but, I might as well admit it, I was on the other side of the fence. I was in the Union army."

"You were? Well, major, did you ever kill anybody?"

"Oh yes," said I; "lots of 'em, — lots of 'em, sir."

"You don't tell me!" said the Virginian. "And if I might be so bold as to ask — how did you generally kill them?"

"Well," said I, "I never like to tell, because bragging is not in my line; but I'll tell you. You see, I never liked this thing of shooting people. It seemed to me a barbarous business, and besides, I was a kind of Quaker, and had conscientious scruples about bearing arms. And so, when the war broke out and I found I'd have to enter the army, maybe, whether I wanted to or not, I enlisted and got in as a quartermaster, thinking that in that position I wouldn't have to kill anybody with a gun, anyhow. But war is a dreadful thing, a dreadful thing, sir. And I found that even a quartermaster had to take a hand at killing people; and the way I took for it was this: I always managed to have a good swift horse, and as soon as things would begin to look a little like fighting, and the big guns would begin to boom, why I'd clap spurs to my horse and make for the rear as fast as ever I could. And then when your people would come after me, they never *could* catch me; they'd always get out of breath trying to come up to

me. And in that way I've killed dozens of your people, sir, dozens of them, and all without powder or ball. They couldn't catch me, and always died for want of breath trying to get hold of me!'"

We slept in the woods that night, under the dark pines and beside our great camp-fires; and early the next morning took up the line of march for home. We marched all day over the hills, and as the sun was setting, came at last to a certain hilltop whence we could look down upon the odd-looking group of cabins and wigwams which we recognized as our camp, and which we hailed with cheers as our home.



CHAPTER VIII.

HOW WE GOT A SHELLING.

“PACK up!” “Fall in!” All is stir and excitement in the camp. The bugles are blowing “boots and saddles” for the cavalry, camped above us on the hill; we drummer-boys are beating the “long roll” and “assembly” for the regiment; mounted orderlies are galloping along the hillside with great yellow envelopes stuck in their belts; and the men fall out of their miserable winter quarters, with shouts and cheers that make the hills about Falmouth ring again. For the winter is past; the sweet breath of spring comes balmily up from the south, and the whole army is on the move, — whither?

“Say, captain, tell us where are we going?” But the captain doesn’t know, nor even the colonel, — nobody knows. We are raw troops yet, and have not learned that soldiers never ask questions about orders.

So, fall in there, all together, and forward! And we ten little drummer-boys beat gayly enough, “The Girl I left behind Me,” as the line sweeps over the hills, through the woods, and on down to the river’s edge.

And soon here we are, on the Rappahannock, three miles below Fredericksburg. We can see, as we emerge from the woods, away over the river, the long line of earthworks thrown up by the enemy, and small dark specks moving about along the field, in the far, dim distance, which we know to be officers, or, perhaps, cavalry pickets. We can see, too, our own first division, laying down the pontoon-bridge, on which, according to a rumor that is spreading among us, we are to cross the river and charge the enemy’s works.

Here is an old army letter lying before me, written on my drum-head, in lead pencil, in that stretch of meadow by the river, where I heard my first shell scream and shriek:—

“NEAR RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER, April 28.

“DEAR FATHER: We have moved to the river, and are just going into battle. I am well, and so are the boys. Your affectionate son,

“HARRY.”

But we do not go into battle this day, nor next day, nor at all at this point; for we are making only a “feint,” though we do not know it now, to attract the attention of the enemy from the main movement of the army at Chancellorsville, some twenty-five or thirty miles farther up the river. The men are in good spirits, and all ready for the fray; but as the day wears on without further developments, arms are stacked, and we begin to roam about the hills. Some are writing letters home, some sleeping, some even fishing in a little rivulet that runs by us, when, toward three o’clock in the afternoon, and all of a sudden, the enemy opens fire on us with a salute of three shells, fired in rapid succession, not quite into our ranks, but a little to the left of us. And see! over there where the Forty-third lies, to our left, come three *stretchers*, and you can see deep crimson stains on the canvas as they go by us, on a lively trot, to the rear; for “the ball is opening, boys,” and we are under fire for the first time.

I wish I could convey to my readers some faint idea of the noise made by a shell as it flies, shrieking and screaming, through the air, and of that peculiar *whirring* sound made by the pieces after the shell has burst overhead or by your side. So loud, high-pitched, shrill, and terrible is the sound, that one unaccustomed to it would think, at first, that the very heavens were being torn down about his ears.

How often I have laughed and laughed at myself when thinking of that first shelling we got there by the river! For up to that time I

had had a very poor, old-fashioned idea of what a shell was like, having derived it, probably, from accounts of sieges in the Mexican war.

I had thought a shell was a hollow ball of iron, filled with powder and furnished with a fuse, and that they threw it over into your ranks, and there it lay, hissing and spitting, till the fire reached the powder, and the shell burst, and killed a dozen men or so, — that is, if some venturesome fellow didn't run up and stamp the fire off the fuse before the miserable thing went off! Of a *conical* shell, shaped like a minie-ball, with ridges on the outside to fit the grooves of a rifled cannon, and exploding by a percussion-cap at the pointed end, I had no idea in the world. But that was the sort of thing they were firing at us now, — Hur-r-r — bang! Hur-r-r — bang!

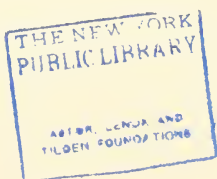
Throwing myself flat on my face while that terrible shriek is in the air, I cling closer to the ground while I hear that low, whirling sound near by, which I foolishly imagine to be the sound of a burning fuse, but which, on raising my head and looking up and around I find is the sound of pieces of exploded shells flying through the air about our heads! The enemy has excellent range of us, and gives it to us hot and fast, and we fall in line and take it as best we may, and without the pleasure of replying, for the enemy's batteries are a full mile and a half away, and no Enfield rifle can reach half so far.

"Colonel, move your regiment a little to the right, so as to get under cover of yonder bank." It is soon done; and there, seated on a bank about twenty feet high, with our backs to the enemy, we let them blaze away, for it is not likely they can tumble a shell down at an angle of forty-five degrees.

And now, see! Just to the rear of us, and therefore in full view as we are sitting, is a battery of our own, coming up into position at full gallop, — a grand sight indeed! The officers with swords flashing in the evening sunlight, the bugles clanging out the orders, the



GENERAL DOUBLEDAY DISMOUNTS AND SIGHTS THE GUN.



carriages unlimbered, and the guns run up into position; and now, that ever-beautiful drill of the artillery in action, steady and regular as the stroke of machinery! How swiftly the man that handles the swab has prepared his piece, while the runners have meanwhile brought up the little red bag of powder, and the long, conical shell from the caisson in the rear. How swiftly they are rammed home! The lieutenant sights his piece, the man with the lanyard, with a sudden jerk, fires the cap, the gun leaps five feet to the rear with the recoil, and out of the cannon's throat, in a cloud of smoke, rushes the shell, shrieking out its message of death into the lines a mile and a half away, while our boys rend the air with wild hurrahs, for the enemy's fire is answered.

Now ensues an artillery duel that keeps the air all quivering and quaking about our ears for an hour and a half, and it is all the more exciting that we can see the beautiful drill of the batteries beside us, with that steady swabbing and ramming, running and sighting, and bang! bang! bang! The mystery is how in the world they can load and fire so fast.

"Boys, what are you trying to do?"

It is Major-General Abner Doubleday, our division commander, who reins in his horse and asks the question. He is a fine-looking officer, and is greatly beloved by the boys. He rides his horse beautifully, and is said to be one of the finest artillerists in the service, as he may well be, for it was his hand that fired the first gun on the Union side from the walls of Fort Sumter.

"Why, general, we are trying to put a shell through that stone barn over there; it's full of sharpshooters."

"Hold a moment!" and the general dismounts and sights the gun. "Try that elevation once, sergeant," he says; and the shell goes crashing through the barn, a mile and a half away, and the sharpshooters come pouring out of it like bees out of a hive. "Let them have it so,

boys." And the general has mounted, and rides, laughing, away along the line.

Meanwhile, something is transpiring immediately before our eyes that amuses us greatly. Not more than twenty yards away from us is another high bank, corresponding exactly with the one we are occupying, and running parallel with it, the two hills inclosing a little ravine some twenty or thirty yards in width.

This second high bank, the nearer one, you must remember, faces the enemy's fire. The water has worn out of the soft sand rock a sort of cave, in which Darkie Bill, our company cook, took refuge at the crack of the first shell. And there, crouching in the narrow recess of the rock, we can see him shivering with affright. Every now and then, when there is a lull in the firing, he comes to the wide-open door of his house, intent upon flight, and, rolling up the great whites of his eyes, is about to step out and run, when hur-r-r — bang — crack! goes the shell, and poor scared Darkie Bill dives into his cave again, head-first, like a frog into a pond.

After repeated attempts to run, and repeated frog-leaps backward, the poor fellow takes heart and cuts for the woods, pursued by the laughter and shouts of the regiment, for which he cares far less, however, than for that terrible shriek in the air, which, he afterward told us, "was a-sayin' all de time, 'Where's dat nigger! Where's dat nigger! Where's dat nigger!'"

As nightfall comes on, the firing ceases. Word is passed around that under cover of night we are to cross the pontoons and charge the enemy's works; but we sleep soundly all night on our arms, and are awakened only by the first streaks of light in the morning sky.

We have orders to move. A staff officer is delivering orders to our colonel, who is surrounded by his staff. They press in toward the messenger, standing immediately below me as I sit on the bank, when the enemy gives us a morning salute, and the shell comes ricochetting

over the hill and tumbles into a mud puddle about which the group is gathered; the mounted officers crouch in their saddles and spur hastily away, the foot officers throw themselves flat on their faces into the mud; the drummer boy is bespattered with mud and dirt; but fortunately, the shell does not explode, or my readers would never have heard how we got our first shelling.

And now, "Fall in, men!" and we are off on a double-quick, in a cloud of dust, amid the rattle of canteens and tin cups, and the regular *flop, flop* of cartridge boxes and bayonet scabbards, pursued for two miles by the hot fire of the enemy's batteries, for a long, hot, weary day's march to the extreme right of the army at Chancellorsville.



CHAPTER IX.

IN THE WOODS AT CHANCELLORSVILLE.

It is no easy matter to describe a long day's march to one who knows nothing of the hardships of a soldier's life. That a body of troops marched some twenty-five or thirty miles on a certain day, from daylight to midnight, from one point to another, seems, to one who has not tried it, no great undertaking. Thirty miles! It is but an hour's ride in the cars. Nor can the single pedestrian, who easily covers greater distances in less time, have a full idea of the fatigue of a soldier as he throws himself down by the roadside, utterly exhausted, when the day's march is done.

Unnumbered circumstances combine to test the soldier's powers of endurance to the very utmost. He has, in the first place, a heavy load to carry. His knapsack, haversack, canteen, ammunition, musket, and accoutrements are by no means a light matter at the outset, and they grow heavier with every additional mile of the road. So true is this, that, in deciding what of our clothing to take along on a march and what to throw away, we soon learned to be guided by the soldiers' proverb that "what weighs an ounce in the morning weighs a pound at night." Then, too, the soldier is not master of his own movements, as is the solitary pedestrian; for he cannot pick his way, nor husband his strength by resting when and where he may choose. He marches generally "four abreast," sometimes at double-quick, when the rear is closing up, and again at a most provokingly slow pace when there is some impediment on the road ahead. Often his canteen is empty, no water is to be had, and he marches on in a cloud of dust, with parched

throat and lips and trembling limbs,—on and on, and still on, until about the midnight hour; at the final “Halt!” he drops to the ground like a shot, feverish, irritable, exhausted in body and soul.

It would seem a shame and a folly to take troops thus utterly worn out, and hurl them at midnight into a battle, the issue of which hangs trembling in the balance. Yet this was what they came pretty near doing with us, after our long march from four miles below Fredericksburg to the extreme right of the army at Chancellorsville.

I have a very indistinct and cloudy recollection of that march. I can quite well remember the beginning of it, when, at the early dawn, the enemy’s batteries drove us, under a sharp shell fire, at a lively double-quick for the first four miles. And I can well recall how, at midnight, we threw ourselves under the great oak trees near Chancellorsville, and were in a moment sound asleep, amid the heaven-rending thunder of the guns, the unbroken roll of the musketry, and the shouts and yells of the lines charging each other a quarter of a mile to our front. But when I attempt to call up the incidents that happened by the way, I am utterly at a loss. My memory has retained nothing but a confused mass of images: here a farmhouse, there a mill; a company of stragglers driven on by the guard; a surgeon writing upon the pommel of his saddle an order for an ambulance to carry a poor exhausted, and but half-conscious fellow; an officer’s staff or an orderly dashing by, at a lively trot; a halt for coffee in the edge of a wood; filling a canteen (oh, blessed memory!) at some meadow stream or roadside spring; and on, and on, and on, amid the rattle of bayonet scabbards and tin cups, mopping our faces and crunching our hard-tack as we went,—this, and such as this, is all that will now come to mind.

But of events toward nightfall the images are clearer, and more sharply defined. The sun is setting, large, red, and fiery looking, in a dull haze that hangs over the thickly wooded horizon. We are near

ing the ford where we are to cross the Rappahannock. We come to some hilltop, and — hark! A deep, ominous growl comes, from how many miles away we know not. Now another; then another!

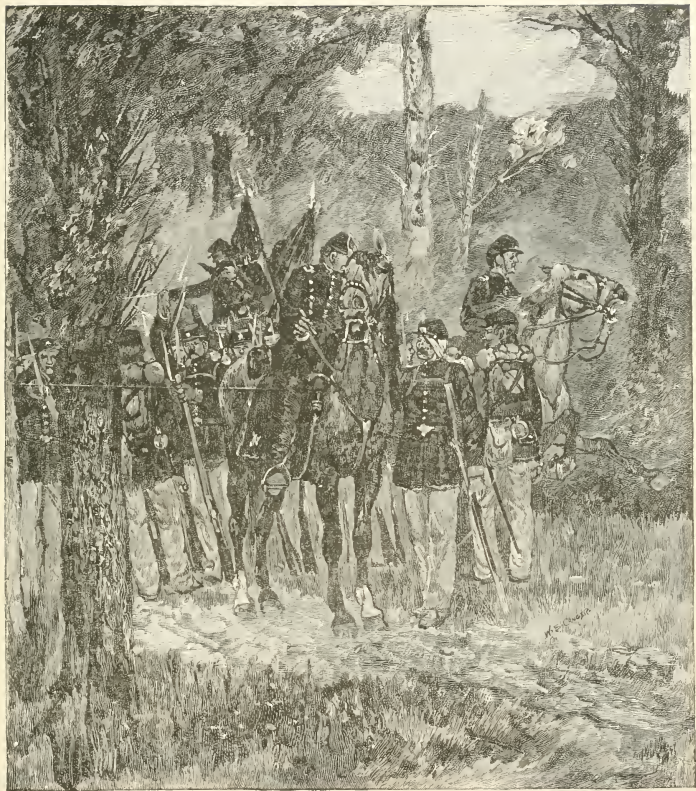
On, boys, on! There is work doing ahead, and terrible work it is, for two great armies are at each other's throat, and the battle is raging fierce and high, although we know nothing as yet of how it may be going.

On, — on, — on!

Turning sharp to the left, we enter the approach to the ford, the road leading, in places, through a deep cut, — great high pine trees on either side of the road shutting out the little remaining light of day. Here we find the first actual evidences of the great battle that is raging ahead: long lines of ambulances, filled with wounded; yonder a poor fellow with a bandaged head, sitting by a spring; and a few steps away another, his agonies now over; here, two men, one, with his arm in a sling, supporting the other, who has turned his musket into a crutch; then more ambulances, and more wounded in increasing numbers; orderlies dashing by at full gallop, while the thunder of the guns grows louder and closer as we step on the pontoons, and so cross the gleaming river.

“Colonel, your men have had a hard day's march; you will now let them rest for the night.”

It is a staff officer whom I hear delivering this order to our colonel, and a sweeter message I think I never heard. We cast wistful eyes at the half-extinguished camp-fires of some regiment that has been making coffee by the roadside, and has just moved off, and we think them a godsend, as the order is given to “Stack arms!” But before we have time even to unsling knapsacks, the order comes, “Fall in!” and away we go again, steadily plodding on through that seemingly endless forest of scrub pine and oak, straight in the direction of the booming guns ahead.



A SURGEON WRITING UPON THE POMMEL OF HIS SADDLE AN ORDER
FOR AN AMBULANCE.



Why whippoorwills were made I do not know — doubtless for some wise purpose; but never before that night did I know they had been made in such countless numbers. Every tree and bush was full of them, it seemed. There were thousands of them, there were tens of thousands of them, there were millions of them! and every one whistling, as fast as it could, “Who-hoo-hoo! who-hoo-hoo! who-hoo-hoo! Had they been vultures or turkey-buzzards, — vast flocks of which followed the army wherever we went, almost darkening the sky at times, and always suggesting unpleasant reflections, — they could not have appeared more execrable to me. Many were the imprecations hurled at them as we plodded on under the light of the great red moon, now above the tree tops, while still from every bush came that monotonous half screech, half groan, “Who-hoo-hoo! Who-hoo-hoo!”

But, oh, miserable birds of ill-omen, there is something more ominous in the air than your lugubrious night song! There is borne to our ears at every additional step the deepening growl of the cannon ahead. As the moon mounts higher, and we advance farther along the level forest land, we hear still more distinctly another sound — the long, unbroken roll of musketry.

Forward, now, at double-quick, until we are on the outskirts of the battlefield.

Shells are crashing through the tall tree tops overhead.

“Halt! Load at will! Load!”

In the moonlight that falls shimmering across the road, as I look back over the column, I see the bright steel flashing, while the jingle of the ramrods makes music that stirs the blood to a quicker pulse. A well-known voice calls me down the line, and Andy whispers a few hurried words into my ear, while he grasps my hand hard. But we are off at a quickstep. A sharp turn to the left, and — hark! The firing has ceased, and they are “charging” down there! That

peculiar, and afterward well-known, "Yi! Yi! Yi!" indicates a struggle, for which we are making straight and fast.

At this moment comes the order: "Colonel, you will countermarch your men, and take position down this road, on the right. Follow me!" The staff officer leads us half a mile to the right, where, sinking down utterly exhausted, we are soon sound asleep.

Of the next day or two I have but an indistinct recollection. What with the fatigue and excitement, the hunger and thirst, of the last few days, a high fever set in for me. I became half delirious, and lay under a great oak tree, too weak to walk, my head nearly splitting with the noise of a battery of steel cannon, in position fifty yards to the left of me. That battery's beautiful but terrible drill I could plainly see. My own corps was put on reserve: the men built strong breastworks, but took no part in the battle, excepting some little skirmishing. Our day was yet to come.

One evening, — it was the last evening we spent in the woods at Chancellorsville, — a sergeant of my company came back to where we were, with orders for me to hunt up and bring an ambulance for one of the lieutenants, who was sick.

"You see, Harry, there are rumors that we are going to retreat to-night, for the heavy rains have so swollen the Rappahannock that our pontoons are in danger of being carried away, and it appears that, for some reason or other, we've got to get out of this at once, under cover of night, and lieutenant can't stand the march. So you will go for an ambulance. You'll find the ambulance-park about two miles from here. You'll take through the woods in that direction," — pointing with his finger, — "until you come to a path; follow the path till you come to a road; follow the road, taking to the right and straight ahead, till you come to the ambulances."

Although it was raining hard at the time, and had been raining for several days, and though I myself was probably as sick as the lieu-

tenant, and felt positive that the troops would have started in retreat before I could get back, yet it was my duty to obey, and off I went.

I had no difficulty in finding the path; and I reached the road all right. Forging a stream, the corduroy bridge of which was all afloat, and walking rapidly for a half hour, I found the ambulances all drawn up ready to retreat.

"We have orders to pull out from here at once, and can send an ambulance for no man. Your lieutenant must take his chance."

It was getting dark fast, as I started back with this message. I was soaked to the skin, and the rain was pouring down in torrents. To make bad worse, in the darkness I turned off from the road at the wrong point, missed the path, and quite lost my way! What was to be done? If I should spend much time where I was, I was certain to be left behind, for I felt sure that the troops were moving off; and yet I feared to make for any of the fires I saw through the woods, for I knew the lines of the two armies were near each other, and I might, as like as not, walk over into the lines of the enemy.

Collecting my poor fevered faculties, I determined to follow the course of a little stream I heard plashing down among the bushes to the left. By and by I fixed my eye on a certain bright camp-fire, and determined to make for it at all hazards, be it of friend or of foe. Judge of my joyful surprise when I found it was burning in front of my own tent!

Standing about our fire, trying to get warm and dry, our fellows were discussing the question of the retreat about to be made. But I was tired and sick, and wet and sleepy, and did not at all relish the prospect of a night march through the woods in drenching rain. So, putting on the only remaining dry shirt I had left, I had *two* on already, and they were soaked through, I lay down under my shelter, shivering and with chattering teeth, but soon fell sound asleep.

In the gray light of the morning we were suddenly awakened by

a loud "Halloo there, you chaps! Better be digging out of this! We're the last line of cavalry pickets, and the Johnnies are on our heels!"

It was an easy matter for us to sling on our knapsacks and rush after the cavalry man, until a double-quick of two miles brought us within the rear line of defences thrown up to cover the retreat.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRST DAY AT GETTYSBURG.

"HARRY, I'm getting tired of this thing. It's becoming monotonous, this thing of being roused every morning at four, with orders to pack up and be ready to march at a moment's notice, and then lying around here all day in the sun. I don't believe we are going anywhere, anyhow."

We had been encamped for six weeks, of which I need give no special account, only saying that in those "summer quarters," as they might be called, we went on with our endless drilling, and were baked and browned, and thoroughly hardened to the life of a soldier in the field.

The monotony of which Andy complained did not end that day, nor the next. For six successive days we were regularly roused at four o'clock in the morning, with orders to "pack up and be ready to move immediately!" only to unpack as regularly about the middle of the afternoon. We could hear our batteries pounding away in the direction of Fredericksburg, but we did not then know that we were being held well in hand till the enemy's plan had developed itself into the great march into Pennsylvania, and we were let off in hot pursuit.

So, at last, on the twelfth of June, 1863, we started, at five o'clock in the morning, in a northwesterly direction. My journal says: "Very warm, dust plenty, water scarce, marching very hard. Halted at dusk at an excellent spring, and lay down for the night with aching limbs and blistered feet."

I pass over the six days' continuous marching that followed,

steadily on toward the north, pausing only to relate several incidents that happened by the way.

On the fourteenth we were racing with the enemy — we being pushed on to the utmost of human endurance — for the possession of the defences of Washington. From five o'clock of that morning till three the following morning, — that is to say from daylight to daylight, — we were hurried along under a burning June sun, with no halt longer than sufficient to recruit our strength with a hasty cup of coffee at noon and nightfall. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve o'clock at night, and still on ! It was almost more than flesh could endure. Men fell out of line in the darkness by the score, and tumbled over by the roadside, asleep almost before they touched the ground.

I remember how a great tall fellow in our company made us laugh along somewhere about one o'clock that morning, — "Pointer," we called him, — an excellent soldier, who afterward fell at his post at Spottsylvania. He had been trudging on in sullen silence for hours, when all of a sudden, coming to a halt, he brought his piece to "order arms" on the hard road with a ring, took off his cap, and, in language far more forcible than elegant, began forthwith to denounce both parties to the war, "from A to Izzard," in all branches of the service, civil and military, army and navy, artillery, infantry, and cavalry, and demanded that the enemy should come on in full force here and now, "and I'll fight them all, single handed and alone, the whole pack of 'em ! I'm tired of this everlasting marching, and I want to fight !"

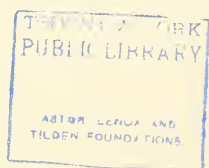
"Three cheers for Pointer !" cried some one, and we laughed heartily as we toiled doggedly on to Manassas, which we reached at three o'clock A. M., June 15th. I can assure you, we lost no time in stretching ourselves at full length in the tall summer grass.

"James McFadden, report to the adjutant for camp guard ! James McFadden ! Anybody know where Jim McFadden is ?"

Now that was rather hard, wasn't it ? To march from daylight to



ON THE MARCH TO AND FROM
GETTYSBURG.



daylight, and lie down for a rest of probably two hours before starting again, and then to be called up to stand throughout those precious two hours on guard duty!

I knew very well where McFadden was, for wasn't he lying right beside me in the grass? But just then I was in no humor to tell. The camp might well go without a guard that night, or the orderly might find McFadden in the dark if he could.

But the rules were strict, and the punishment was severe, and poor McFadden, bursting into tears of vexation, answered like a man: "Here I am, orderly; I'll go." It was hard.

Two weeks later, both McFadden and the orderly went where there is neither marching nor standing guard any more.

Now comes a long rest of a week, in the woods near the Potomac; for we have been marching parallel with the enemy, and dare not go too fast, lest, by some sudden and dexterous move in the game, he should sweep past our rear in upon the defences of Washington. And after this sweet refreshment, we cross the Potomac on pontoons, and march, perhaps with a lighter step, since we are nearing home, through the smiling fields and pleasant villages of "Maryland, my Maryland." At Poolesville, a little town on the north bank of the Potomac, we smile as we see a lot of children come trooping out of the village school, — a merry sight to men who have seen neither woman nor child these six months and more, and a touching sight to many a man in the ranks as he thinks of his little flaxen heads in the far-away home. Ay, think of them now, and think of them full tenderly too, for many a man of you shall never have child climb on his knee any more?

As we enter one of those pleasant little Maryland villages, — Jefferson by name, — we find on the outskirts of the place two young ladies and two young gentlemen waving the good old flag as we pass, and singing, "Rally round the Flag, Boys!" The excitement along the line is intense. Cheer on cheer is given, by regiment after regiment,

as we pass along, we drummer-boys beating, at the colonel's express orders, the old tune, "The Girl I left Behind me," as a sort of response. Soon we are in among the hills again, and still the cheering goes on in the far distance to the rear.

Only ten days later, we passed through the same village again, and were met by the same young ladies and gentlemen, waving the same flag and singing the same song. But though we tried twice, and tried hard, we could not cheer at all; for there's a difference between five hundred men and one hundred, — is there not? So, that second time, we drooped our tattered flags, and raised our caps in silent and sorrowful salute. Through Middletown next, where a rumor reaches us that the enemy's forces have occupied Harrisburg, and where certain ladies, standing on a balcony and waving their handkerchiefs as we pass by, in reply to our colonel's greeting, that "we are glad to see so many Union people here," answer, "Yes; and we are glad to see the Yankee soldiers, too."

From Middletown, at six o'clock in the evening, across the mountain to Frederick, on the outskirts of which city we camp for the night. At half-past five next morning (June 29th) we are up and away, in a drizzling rain, through Lewistown and Mechanicstown, near which latter place we pass a company of Confederate prisoners, twenty-four in number, dressed in well-worn gray and butternut, which makes us think that the enemy cannot be far ahead. After a hard march of twenty-five miles, the greater part of the way over a turnpike, we reach Emmitsburg at nightfall, some of us quite barefoot, and all of us footsore and weary. Next morning (June 30th) at nine o'clock we were up and away again, "on the road leading towards Gettysburg," they say. After crossing the line between Maryland and Pennsylvania, where the colonel halts the column for a moment, in order that we may give three rousing cheers for the "Old Keystone State," we march perceptibly slower, as if there were some impediment

in the way. There is a feeling among the men that the enemy is somewhere near. Towards noon we leave the public road, and taking across the fields, form in line of battle along the rear of a wood, and pickets are thrown out. There is an air of uncertainty and suspicion in the ranks as we look to the woods, and consider what our pickets may possibly unmask there. But no developments have yet been made when darkness comes, and we bivouac for the night behind a strong stone wall.

Passing down along the line of glowing fires, in the gathering gloom, I come on one of my company messes squatting about a fire, cooking supper. Joe Gutelius, corporal and color-guard from our company, is superintending the boiling of a piece of meat in a tin can, while Sam Ruhl and his brother Joe are smoking their pipes near by.

"Boys, it begins to look a little dubious, don't it? Where is Jimmy Lucas?"

"He's out on picket, in the woods yonder. Yes, Harry, it begins to look a little as if we were about to stir the Johnnies out of the brush," says Joe Gutelius, throwing another rail on the fire.

"If we do," says Joe Ruhl, "remember that you have the post of honor, Joe, and if any man pulls down that flag, shoot him on the spot!"

"Never you fear for that," answers Joe Gutelius. "We of the color-guard will look out for the flag. For my part, I'll stay a dead man on the field before the colors of the 150th are disgraced."

"You'll have some tough tussling for your colors, then," says Sam. "If the 'Louisiana Tigers' get after you once, look out!"

"Who's afraid of the 'Louisiana Tigers'? I'll back the 'Buck-tails' against the 'Tigers' any day. Stay and take supper with us, Harry! We are going to have a feast to-night. I have the heart of a beef boiling in the can yonder; and it is done now. Sit up, boys, get out your knives, and fall in."

"We were going to have boiled lion heart for supper, Harry," says Joe Ruhl, with mock apology for the fare, "but we couldn't catch any lions. They seem to be scarce in these parts. Maybe, we can catch a tiger to-morrow, though."

Little do we think, as we sit thus cheerily talking about the blazing fire behind the stone wall, that it is our last supper together, and that ere another nightfall two of us will be sleeping in the silent bivouac of the dead.

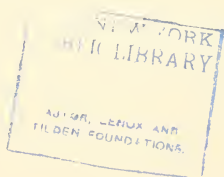
"Colonel, close up your men, and move on as rapidly as possible."

It is the morning of July 1st, and we are crossing a bridge over a stream, as the staff officer, having delivered this order for us, dashes down the line to hurry up the regiments in the rear. We get up on a high range of hills, from which we have a magnificent view. The day is bright, the air is fresh and sweet with the scent of the new-mown hay, and the sun shines out of an almost cloudless sky, and as we gaze away off yonder down the valley to the left—look! Do you see that? A puff of smoke in mid air! Very small, and miles away, as the faint and long-coming "boom" of the exploding shell indicates; but it means that something is going on yonder, away down in the valley, in which, perhaps, we may have a hand before the day is done. See! another—and another! Faint and far away comes the long-delayed "boom!" "boom!" echoing over the hills, as the staff officer dashes along the lines with orders to "double-quick! double-quick!"

Four miles of almost constant double-quickening is no light work at any time, least of all on such a day as this memorable first day of July, for it is hot and dusty. But we are in our own state now, boys, and the battle is opening ahead, and it is no time to save breath. On we go, now up a hill, now over a stream, now checking our headlong rush for a moment, for we *must* breathe a little. But the word comes along the line again, "double-quick," and we settle down to it with right



A SKIRMISH AFTER A HARD DAY'S MARCH.



good will, while the cannon ahead seem to be getting nearer and louder. There's little said in the ranks, for there is little breath for talking, though every man is busy enough thinking. We all feel, somehow, that our day has come at last — as indeed it has !

We get in through the outskirts of Gettysburg, tearing down the fences of the town lots and outlying gardens as we go ; we pass a battery of brass guns drawn up beside the Seminary, some hundred yards in front of which building, in a strip of meadow land, we halt, and rapidly form the line of battle.

“ General, shall we unsling knapsacks ? ” shouts some one down the line to our division general, as he is dashing by.

“ Never mind the knapsacks, boys ; it's the state now ! ”

And he plunges his spurs into the flanks of his horse, as he takes the stake-and-rider fence at a leap, and is away.

“ Unfurl the flags, color-guard ! ”

“ Now, forward, double —— ”

“ Colonel, we're not loaded yet ! ”

A laugh runs along the line as, at the command “ Load at will -- load ! ” the ramrods make their merry music, and at once the word is given, “ Forward, double-quick ! ” and the line sweeps up that rising ground with banners gayly flying, and cheers that rend the air, — a sight, once seen, never to be forgotten.

I suppose my readers wonder what a drummer-boy does in time of battle. Perhaps they have the same idea I used to have, namely, that it is the duty of a drummer-boy to beat his drum all the time the battle rages, to encourage the men or drown the groans of the wounded ! But if they will reflect a moment, they will see that amid the confusion and noise of battle, there is little chance of martial music being either heard or heeded. Our colonel had long ago given us our orders, —

“ You drummer-boys, in time of an engagement, are to lay aside

your drums and take stretchers and help off the wounded. I expect you to do this, and you are to remember that, in doing it, you are just as much helping the battle on as if you were fighting with guns in your hands."

And so we sit down there on our drums and watch the line going in with cheers. Forthwith we get a smart shelling, for there is evidently somebody else watching that advancing line besides ourselves; but they have elevated their guns a little too much, so that every shell passes quite over the line and ploughs up the meadow sod about *us* in all directions.

Laying aside our knapsacks, we go to the Seminary, now rapidly filling with the wounded. This the enemy surely cannot know, or they wouldn't shell the building so hard! We get stretchers at the ambulances, and start out for the line of battle. We can just see our regimental colors waving in the orchard, near a log house about three hundred yards ahead, and we start out for it—I on the lead, and Daney behind.

There is one of our batteries drawn up to our left a short distance as we run. It is engaged in a sharp artillery duel with one of the enemy's, which we cannot see, although we can hear it plainly enough, and straight between the two our road lies. So, up we go, Daney and I, at a lively trot, dodging the shells as best we can, till, panting for breath, we set down our stretcher under an apple tree in the orchard, in which, under the brow of the hill, we find the regiment lying, one or two companies being out on the skirmish line ahead.

I count six men of Company C lying yonder in the grass—killed, they say, by a single shell. Close beside them lies a tall, magnificently built man, whom I recognize by his uniform as belonging to the "Iron Brigade," and therefore probably an Iowa boy. He lies on his back at full length, with his musket beside him—calm looking as if asleep, but having a fatal blue mark on his forehead and the ashen pallor of

death on his countenance. Andy calls me away for a moment to look after some poor fellow whose arm is off at the shoulder; and it was just time I got away, too, for immediately a shell plunges into the sod where I had been sitting, tearing my stretcher to tatters, and ploughing up a great furrow under one of the boys who had been sitting immediately behind me, and who thinks, "That was rather close shaving, wasn't it, now?" The bullets whistling overhead make pretty music with their ever-varying "z-i-p! z-i-p!" and we could imagine them so many bees, only they have such a terribly sharp sting. They tell me, too of a certain cavalry man, Dennis Buckley, Sixth Michigan cavalry, it was, as I afterwards learned—let history preserve the brave boy's name, who, having had his horse shot under him, and seeing that first-named shell explode in Company C with such disaster, exclaimed, "That is the company for me!" He remained with the regiment all day, doing good service with his carbine, and he escaped unhurt!

"Here they come boys; we'll have to go in at them on a charge, I guess!" Creeping close around the corner of the log-house, I can see the long lines of gray sweeping up in fine style over the fields; but I feel the colonel's hand on my shoulder.

"Keep back, my boy; no use exposing yourself in that way."

As I get back behind the house and look around, an old man is seen approaching our line through the orchard in the rear. He is dressed in a long blue swallow-tailed coat and high silk hat, and coming up to the colonel, he asks, —

"Would you let an old chap like me have a chance to fight in your ranks, colonel?"

"Can you shoot?" inquires the colonel.

"Oh yes, I can shoot, I reckon," says he.

"But where are your cartridges?"

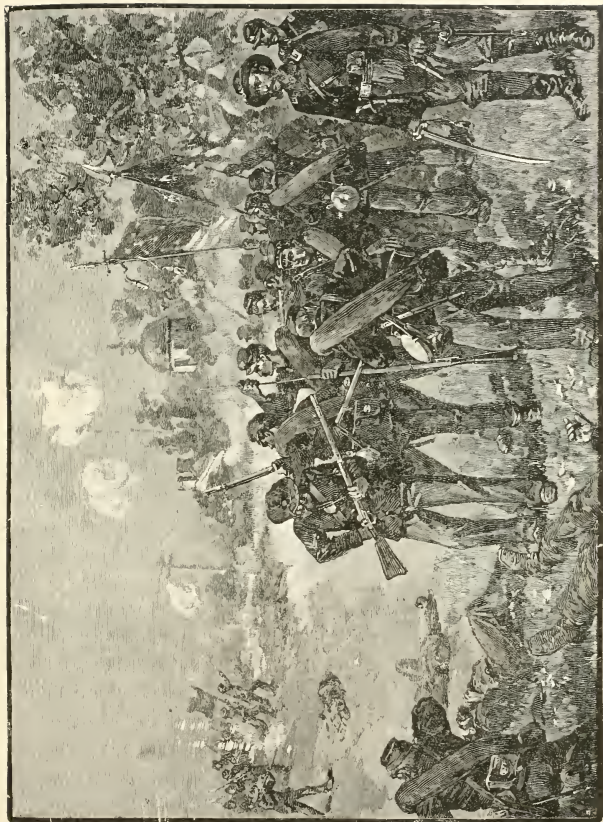
"I've got 'em here, sir," says the old man, slapping his hand on his trousers pocket.

And so "old John Burns," of whom every schoolboy has heard, takes his place in the line, and loads and fires with the best of them, and is left wounded and insensible on the field when the day is done.

Reclining there under a tree while the skirmishing is going on in front, and the shells are tearing up the sod around us, I observe how evidently hard pressed is that battery yonder in the edge of the wood, about fifty yards to our right. The enemy's batteries have excellent range on the poor fellows serving it. And when the smoke lifts or rolls away, in great clouds, for a moment, we can see the men running, and ramming, and sighting, and firing, and swabbing, and changing position every few minutes, to throw the enemy's guns out of range a little. The men are becoming terribly few, but nevertheless their guns, with a rapidity that seems unabated, belch forth great clouds of smoke, and send the shells shrieking over the plain.

Meanwhile, events occur which give us something more to think of than mere skirmishing and shelling. Our beloved brigadier-general, Roy Stone, stepping out a moment to reconnoitre the enemy's position and movements, is seen by some sharpshooter off in a tree, and is carried, severely wounded, into the barn. Our colonel, Langhorne Wister, assumes command of the brigade. Our regiment, facing westward, while the line on our right faces to the north, is observed to be exposed to an enfilading fire from the enemy's guns, as well as from the long line of gray now appearing in full sight on our right. So our regiment must form in line and "change front forward," in order to come in line with the other regiments. Accomplished swiftly, this new movement brings our line at once face to face with the enemy's, which advances to within fifty yards, and exchanges a few volleys, but is soon checked and staggered by our fire.

Yet now, see! Away to our left, and consequently on our flank, a new line appears, rapidly advancing out of the woods a half mile away, and there must be some quick and sharp work done now, boys,



AT CLOSE QUARTERS THE FIRST DAY AT GETTYSBURG.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

or, between the old foes in front and the new ones on our flank, we shall be annihilated. To clear us of these old assailants in front before the new line can sweep down on our flank, our brave colonel, in a ringing command, orders a charge along the whole line. Then, before the gleaming and bristling bayonets of our "Bucktail" Brigade as it yells and cheers, sweeping resistlessly over the field, the enemy gives way, and flies in confusion. But there is little time to watch them fly, for that new line on our left is approaching at a rapid pace; and, with shells falling thick and fast into our ranks, and men dropping everywhere, our regiment must reverse the former movement by "changing front to rear," and so resume its original position, facing westward; for the enemy's new line is approaching from that direction, and if it takes us in flank we are done for.

To "change front to rear" is a difficult movement to execute even on drill, much more so under severe fire; but it is executed now, steadily and without confusion, yet not a minute too soon! For the new line of gray is upon us in a mad tempest of lead, supported by a cruel artillery fire, almost before our line can steady itself to receive the shock. However, partially protected by a post-and-rail fence, we answer fiercely, and with effect so terrific, that the enemy's line wavers, and at length moves off by the right flank, giving us a breathing space for a time.

During this struggle, there had been many an exciting scene all along the line, as it swayed backward and forward over the field, — scenes which we have had no time to mention yet.

See yonder, where the colors of the regiment on our right — our sister regiment, the 149th — have been advanced a little, to draw the enemy's fire, while our line sweeps on to the charge. There ensues about the flags a wild *mêlée* and close hand-to-hand encounter. Some of the enemy have seized the colors and are making off with them in triumph, shouting victory. But a squad of our own regiment dashes

out swiftly, led to the rescue of the stolen colors by Sergeant John C. Kensill, of Company F, who falls to the ground before reaching them, and amid yells and cheers and smoke you see the battle flags rise and fall, and sway hither and thither upon the surging mass, as if tossed on the billows of a tempest, until, wrenched away by strong arms, they are borne back in triumph to the line of the 149th.

See yonder, again! Our colonel is clapping his hand to his cheek, from which a red stream is pouring; our lieutenant-colonel, Henry S. Huidekoper, is kneeling on the ground, and is having his handkerchief tied tight around his arm at the shoulder; Major Thomas Chamberlain and Adjutant Richard L. Ashurst both lie low, pierced with balls through the chest; one lieutenant is waving his sword to his men, although his leg is crushed at the knee; three other officers of the line are lying over there, motionless now forever. All over the field are strewn men, wounded or dead, and comrades pause a moment in the mad rush to catch the last words of the dying. Incidents such as these the reader must imagine for himself, to fill in these swift sketches of how the day was won — and lost!

Ay, lost! For the balls which have so far come mainly from our front, begin now to sing in from our left and right, which means that we are being flanked. Somehow, away off to our right, a half mile or so, our line has given way, and is already on retreat through the town, while our left is being driven in, and we ourselves may shortly be surrounded and crushed — and so the retreat is sounded.

Back now along the railroad cut we go, or through the orchard and the narrow strip of woods behind it, with our dead scattered around on all sides, and the wounded crying piteously for help.

"Harry! Harry!" It is a faint cry of a dying man yonder in the grass, and I *must* see who it is.

"Why, Willie! Tell me where you are hurt," I ask, kneeling down beside him; and I see the words come hard, for he is fast dying.

“Here in my side, Harry. Tell — mother — mother” —

Poor fellow, he can say no more. His head falls back, and Willie is at rest forever !

On, now, through that strip of woods, at the other edge of which, with my back against a stout oak, I stop and look at a beautiful and thrilling sight. Some reserves are being brought up ; infantry in the centre, the colors flying and officers shouting ; cavalry on the right, with sabres flashing and horses on a trot ; artillery on the left, with guns at full gallop sweeping into position to check the headlong pursuit, — it is a grand sight, and a fine rally ; but a vain one, for in an hour we are swept off the field, and are in full retreat through the town.

Up through the streets hurries the remnant of our shattered corps, while the enemy is pouring into the town only a few squares away from us. There is a tempest of shrieking shells and whistling balls about our ears. The guns of that battery by the woods we have dragged along, all the horses being disabled. The artillery men load as we go, double-charging with grape and canister.

“Make way there, men !” is the cry, and the surging mass crowds close up on the sidewalks to right and left, leaving a long lane down the centre of the street, through which the grape and canister go rattling into the ranks of the enemy’s advance guard.

And so, amid scenes which I have neither space nor power to describe, we gain Cemetery Ridge towards sunset, and throw ourselves down by the road in a tumult of excitement and grief, having lost the day through the overwhelming force of numbers, and yet somehow having gained it too, although as yet we know it not, for the sacrifice of our corps has saved the position for the rest of the army, which has been marching all day, and which comes pouring in over Cemetery Ridge all night long.

Ay, the position is saved ; but where is our corps ? Well may our

division general, Doubleday, who early in the day succeeded to the command, when our brave Reynolds had fallen, shed tears of grief as he sits there on his horse and looks over the shattered remains of that First Army Corps, for there is but a handful of it left. Of the five hundred and fifty men that marched under our regimental colors in the morning, but one hundred remain. All our field and staff officers are gone. Of some twenty captains and lieutenants, but one is left without a scratch, while of my own company only thirteen out of fifty-four sleep that night on Cemetery Ridge, under the open canopy of heaven. There is no roll call, for Sergeant Weidensaul will call the roll no more; nor will Joe Gutelius, nor Joe Ruhl, nor McFadden, nor Henning, nor many others of our comrades whom we miss, ever answer to their names again until the world's last great reveillé.

CHAPTER XL.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

I HAD frequently seen pictures of battlefields, and had often read about them ; but the most terrible scenes of carnage my boyish imagination had ever figured fell far short of the dreadful reality as I beheld it after the great battle of the war. It was the evening of Sunday, July 5, 1863, when, at the suggestion of Andy, we took our way across the breastworks, stone fences, and redoubts, to look over the battlefield. Our shattered brigade had been mainly on reserve during the last three days ; and as we made our way through the troops lying in our front, and over the defences of stone and earth and ragged rocks, the scene among our troops was one for the pencil of a great artist.

Scattered about irregularly were groups of men discussing the battle and its results, or relating exciting incidents and adventures of the fray : here, one fellow pointing out bullet holes in his coat or cap, or a great rent in the sleeve of his blouse made by a flying piece of shell ; there, a man laughing as he held up his crushed canteen, or showed his tobacco-box with a hole in the lid and a bullet among his "fine cut" ; yonder, knots of men frying steaks and cooking coffee about the fire, or making ready for sleep.

Before we pass beyond our own front line, evidences of the terrible carnage of the battle environ us on all sides. Fresh, hastily dug graves are there, with rude head boards telling the poor fellows' names and regiments ; yonder, a tree on whose smooth bark the names of three Confederate generals, who fell here in the gallant charge, have

been carved by some thoughtful hand. The trees round about are chipped by the balls and stripped almost bare by the leaden hail, while a log house near by in the clearing has been so riddled with shot and shell that scarcely a whole shingle is left to its roof.

But sights still more fearful await us as we step out beyond the front line, pick our way carefully among the great rocks, and walk down the slope to the scene of the fearful charge. The ground has been soaked with the recent rains, and the heavy mist which hangs like a pall over the field, together with the growing darkness, render objects but indistinctly visible, and all the more ghastly. As the eye ranges over so much of the field as the shrouding mist allows us to see, we behold a scene of destruction terrible indeed, if ever there was one in all this wide world! Dismounted gun carriages, shattered caissons, knapsacks, haversacks, muskets, bayonets, accoutrements, scattered over the field in wildest confusion,—horses, poor creatures! dead and dying,—and, worst and most awful of all, dead men by the hundreds! Most of the men in blue have been buried already, and the pioneers yonder in the mist are busy digging trenches for the poor fellows in gray.

As we pass along, we stop to observe how thickly they lie, here and there, like grain before the scythe in summer time,—how firmly some have grasped their guns, with high, defiant looks,—and how calm are the countenances of others in their last solemn sleep; while more than one has clutched in his stiffened fingers a piece of white paper, which he waved, poor soul, in his death agony, as a plea for quarter, when the great wave of battle had receded and left him there, mortally wounded, on the field.

I sicken of the dreadful scene, can endure it no longer, and beg Andy to “Come away! Come away! It’s too awful to look at any more!”

And so we get back to our place in the breastworks with sad,

heavy hearts, and wonder how we ever could have imagined war so grand and gallant a thing when, after all, it is so horribly wicked and cruel. We lie down — the thirteen of us that are left in the company — on a big flat rock, sleeping without shelter, and shielding our faces from the drizzling rain with our caps, as best we may, thinking of the dreadful scene in front there, and of the sad, heavy hearts there will be all over the land for weary years, till kindly sleep comes to us, with sweet forgetfulness of all.

Our clothes were damp with the heavy mists and drizzling rain when we awoke next morning, and hastily prepared for the march off the field, and the long pursuit of the foe through the waving grain fields of Maryland. Having cooked our coffee in our blackened tin cups, and roasted our slices of fresh beef, stuck on the end of a ram-rod and thrust into the crackling fires, we were ready in a moment for the march, for we had but little to pack up,

Straight over the field we go, through that valley of death where the heavy charging had been done, and thousands of men had been swept away, line after line, in the mad and furious tempest of the battle. Heavy mists still overhang the field, even dumb Nature seeming to be in sympathy with the scene, while all around us, as we march along, are sights at which the most callous turn faint. Interesting enough we find the evidences of conflict, save only where human life is concerned.

We stop to wonder at the immense furrow yonder, which some shell has ploughed up in the ground; we call one another's attention to a caisson shivered to atoms by an explosion, or to a tree cut clean off by a solid shot, or bored through and through by a shell. With pity we contemplate the poor artillery horses hobbling, wounded and mangled, about the field, and we think it a mercy to shoot them as we pass. But the dead men! Hundreds of torn and distorted bodies yet on the field, although thousands already lie buried in the trenches.

Even the roughest and rudest among us marches awed and silent, as he is forced to think of the terrible suffering endured in this place, and of the sorrow and tears there will be among the mountains of the North and the rice fields of the far-off South.

We were quiet, I remember, very quiet, as we marched off that great field ; and not only then, but for days afterwards, as we tramped through the pleasant fields of Maryland. We had little to say, and we all were pretty busily thinking. Where were the boys who, but a week before, had marched with us through those same fragrant fields, blithe as a sunshiny morn in May ? And so, as I have told you, when those young ladies and gentlemen came out to the end of that Maryland village to meet and cheer us after the battle, as they had met and cheered us before it, we did not know how heavy-hearted we were until, in response to their song of "Rally round the Flag, Boys !" some one proposed three cheers for them. But the cheers would not come. Somehow, after the first hurrah, the other two stuck in our throats or died away soundless on the air. And so we only said, "God bless you, young friends ; but we can't cheer to-day, you see !"



CHAPTER XII.

THROUGH "MARYLAND, MY MARYLAND."

OUR course now lay through Maryland, and we performed endless marches and countermarches over turnpikes and through field and forest.

After crossing South Mountain, — but stop, I just *must* tell you about that, it will take but a paragraph or two. South Mountain Pass we entered one July evening, after a drenching rain, on the Middletown side, and marched along through that deep mountain gorge, with a high cliff on either side, and a delightful stream of fresh water flowing along the road; emerging on the other side at the close of day. Breaking off the line of march by the right flank, we suddenly crossed the stream, and were ordered up the mountain side in the gathering darkness. We climbed very slowly at first, and more slowly still as the darkness deepened and the path grew steeper and more difficult. At about nine o'clock, orders were given to "sleep on arms," and then, from sheer fatigue, we all fell sound asleep, some lying on the rocks, some sitting bolt upright against the trees, some stretched out at full length on beds of moss or clumps of bushes.

What a magnificent sight awaited us the next morning! Opening our eyes at peep o' day, we found ourselves high up on top of a mountain bluff, overlooking the lovely valley about Boonesboro. The rains were past; the sun was just beginning to break through the clouds; great billows of mist were rolling up from the hollows below, where we could catch occasional glimpses of the movements of troops, — cavalry dashing about in squads, and infantry marching in solid

columns. What may have been the object of sending us up that mountain, or what the intention in ordering us to fell the trees from the mountain-top, and build breastworks hundreds of feet above the valley, I have never learned. That one morning amid the mists of the mountain, and that one grand view of the lovely valley beneath, were to my mind sufficient reason for being there.

Refreshed by a day's rest on the mountain-top, we march down into the valley on the tenth, exhilarated by the sweet, fresh mountain air, as well as by the prospect, as we suppose, of a speedy end being put to this cruel war. For we know that the enemy is somewhere crossing the swollen Potomac back into Virginia, in a crippled condition, and we are sure he will be finally crushed in the next great battle, which cannot now be many hours distant. And so we march leisurely along, over turnpikes and through grain fields, on the edge of one of which, by and by, we halt in line of battle, stack arms, and, with three cheers, rush in a line for a stake-and-rider fence, with the rails of which we are to build breastworks. It is wonderful how rapidly that Maryland farmer's fence disappears! Each man seizing a rail, the fence literally walks off, and in less than fifteen minutes it reappears in the shape of a compact and well-built line of breastworks.

But scarcely is the work completed when we are ordered into the road again, and up this we advance a half-mile or so, and form in line on the left of the road and on the skirt of another wheat field. We are about to stack arms and build a second line of works, when, —

Z-i-p! z-i-p! z-i-p!

Ah! It is music we know right well by this time! Three light puffs of smoke rise yonder in the wheat field, a hundred yards or so away, where the enemy's pickets are lying concealed in the tall grain. Three balls go singing merrily over my head — intended, no doubt, for the lieutenant, who is acting-adjutant, and who rides immediately in

front of me, with a bandage over his forehead, but who is too busy forming the line to give much heed to his danger.

"We'll take you out o' that grass a-hopping, you long-legged rascals!" shouts Pointer, as the command is given, —

"Deploy to right and left as skirmishers," — while a battery of artillery is brought up at a gallop, and the guns are trained on a certain red barn away across the field, from which the enemy's sharpshooters are picking off our men.

Bang! Hur-r-r! Boom! One, two, three, four shells go crashing through the red barn, while the shingles and boards fly like feathers, and the sharpshooters pour out from it in wild haste. The pickets are popping away at one another out there along the field, and in the edge of the wood beyond; the enemy is driven in and retreats, but we do not advance, and the expected battle does not come off, after all, as we had hoped it would. For in the great war-council held about that time, as we afterwards learned, our generals, by a close vote, have decided not to risk a general engagement, but to let the enemy get back into Virginia again, crippled, indeed, but not crushed, as every man in the ranks believes he well might be.

As we step on the swaying pontoons to recross the Potomac into old Virginia, there are murmurs of disappointment all along the line.

"Why didn't they let us fight? We could have thrashed them now, if ever we could. We are tired of this everlasting marching and countermarching up and down, and we want to fight it out and be done with it."

But for all our feelings and wishes we are back again on the south side of the river, and the column of blue soon is marching along gayly enough among the hills and pleasant fields about Waterford.

We did not go very fast nor very far those hot July days, because we had very little to eat. Somehow or other our provision trains had lost their reckoning, and in consequence we were left to subsist as

best we could. We were a worn, haggard-looking, hungry, ragged set of men. As for me — out at knee and elbow, my hair sticking out in tufts through holes in the top of my hat, my shoes in shreds, and my haversack empty — I must have presented a forlorn appearance indeed. Fortunately, however, blackberries were ripe and plentiful. All along the road, and all through the fields, as we approached Warrenton, these delicious berries hung on the vines in great luscious clusters. Yet blackberries for supper and blackberries for breakfast give a man but little strength for marching, under a July sun, all day long. So Corporal Harter and I thought, as we sat one morning in a clover field, where we were resting for the day, busy boiling a chicken at our camp-fire.

“Where did you get that chicken, corporal?” said I.

“Well, you see, Harry, I didn’t steal her, and I didn’t buy her, neither. Late last night, while we were crossing that creek, I heard some fellow say he had carried that old chicken all day since morning, and she was getting too heavy for him, and he was going to throw her into the creek; and so I said I’d take her, and I did, and carried her all night, and here she is now in the pan, sizzling away, Harry.”

“I’m afraid, corporal, this is a fowl trick.”

“Fair or fowl, we’ll have a good dinner, any way.”

With an appetite ever growing keener as we caught savory whiffs from the steaming mess-pan, we piled up the rails on the fire and boiled the biddy, and boiled, and boiled, and boiled her from morn till noon, and from noon till night, and couldn’t eat her then, she was so tough!

“May the dogs take the old grizzle-gizzard! I’m not going to break my teeth on this old buzzard any more,” shouted the corporal, as he flung the whole cartilaginous mass into a pile of brush near by. “It *was* a fowl trick, after all, Harry, wasn’t it?”

Thus it chanced that, when we marched out of Warrenton early

one sultry summer morning, we started with empty stomachs and haversacks, and marched on till noon with nothing to eat. Halting then in a wood, we threw ourselves under the trees, utterly exhausted. About three o'clock, as we lay there, a whole staff of officers came riding down the line — the quartermaster-general of the Army of the Potomac and staff, they said it was. Just the very man we wanted to see! Then broke forth such a yell from hundreds of famished men as the quartermaster-general had probably never heard before nor ever wished to hear again, —

"Hard-tack!"

"Coffee!"

"Pork!"

"Beef!"

"Sugar!"

"Salt!"

"Pepper!"

"Hard-tack! Hard-tack!"

The quartermaster and staff put their spurs to their horses and dashed away in a cloud of dust, and at last, about nightfall, we got something to eat.

By the way, this reminds me of an incident that occurred on one of our long marches; and I tell it just to show what sometimes is the effect of short rations.

It was while we were lying up at Chancellorsville in an immense forest that our supply of pork and hard-tack began to give out. We had, indeed, carried with us into the woods eight full days' rations in our knapsacks and haversacks; but it rained in torrents for several days, so that our hard-tack became mouldy, the roads were impassable, transportation was out of the question, and we were forced to put ourselves on short allowance.

"I wish I had some meat, Harry," said Pete Grove, anxiously

inspecting the contents of his haversack; "I'm awful hungry for meat."

"Well, Pete," said I, "I saw some jumping around here pretty lively a while ago. Maybe, you could catch it."

"*Meat* jumping around here? Why what do you mean?"

"Why frogs, to be sure — frogs, Pete. Did you never eat frogs?"

"Bah! I think I'd be a great deal hungrier than I am now, ever to eat a frog! Ugh! No, indeed! But where is he? I'd like the fun of hunting him, anyhow."

So saying, he loaded his revolver, and we sallied forth along the stream, and Pete, who was a good marksman, in a short time had laid out Mr. Froggy at the first shot.

"Now, Pete, we'll skin him, and you shall have a feast fit for a king."

So, putting the meat into a tin cup with a little water, salt, and pepper, boiling it for a few minutes, and breaking some hard-tack into it when done, I set it before him. I need hardly say that when he had once tasted the dish he speedily devoured it, and when he had devoured it, he took his revolver in hand again, and hunted frogs for the rest of that afternoon.



"I'VE GOT HIM, BOYS."

Drum and fife have more to do with the discipline of an army than an inexperienced person would imagine. The drum is the tongue of the camp. It wakes the men in the morning, mounts the guard, announces the dinner hour, gives a peculiar charm to dress parade in the evening, and calls the men to quarters with its pleasant tattoo at night. For months, however, we had had no drums. Ours had been lost, with our knapsacks, at Gettysburg. [And I will here pause to say that if any good friend across the border has in his possession a snare-drum with the name and regiment of the writer clearly marked on the inside of the body, and will return the same to the owner thereof, he will confer no small favor, and will be overwhelmed with an ocean of thanks !]

We did not know how really important a thing a drum is until, one late September day, we were ordered to prepare for a dress-parade — a species of regimental luxury in which we had not indulged since the early days of June.

"Major, you don't expect us drummer boys to turn out, do you?"

"Certainly. And why not, my boy?"

"Why, we have no drums, major!"

"Well, your fifers have fifes, haven't they? We'll do without the drums; but you must all turn out, and the fifers can play."

So when we stood drawn up in line on the parade-ground among the woods, and the order was given, —

"Parade rest! Troop, beat off!"

Out we drummers and fifers wheeled from the head of the line, with three shrill fifes screaming out the rolls, and started at a slow march down the line, while every man in the ranks grinned, and we drummer boys laughed, and the officers joined us, until at last the whole line, officers and men alike, broke out into loud haw-haws at the sight. The fifers couldn't whistle for laughing, and the major ordered

us all back to our places when only half down the line, and never even attempted another parade until a full supply of brand new drums arrived for us from Washington.

Then the major picked out mine for me, I remember, and it proved to be the best in the lot.

Speaking of drums and drumming, I am reminded of an amusing incident said to have occurred in one of our regiments—let it be understood it was not in ours. On a march through a certain town, the drum corps had struck up some lively music, when the colonel noticed that one drummer boy was not beating his drum. “Adjutant,” said he, “one of the drummers is not beating. Go, find the reason why.” Riding up to the musicians the adjutant, with a black military frown on his face, shouted to the boy, “The colonel wants to know why you are not beating your drum?” “Tell the colonel,” said the culprit, in a whisper loud enough to be enjoyed some distance down the line. “Tell the colonel that I can’t beat my drum now. I have two live turkeys in my drum—and one of them is for the colonel!”

Some brief mention of the town of Waterford having been made in the foregoing chapter, it may be well to say just a little more about it. After the contents of this book had first appeared in the columns of *St. Nicholas*, I received a characteristic letter from a boy which it may interest the reader to see. During the time which elapsed between the first and second editions of these “Recollections,” I received a great number of letters from soldiers, and their children, both Federal and Confederate, from many of the states in the Union, and became, besides, a kind of rallying point, or bureau of information, for the scattered members of my regiment. But of all the letters received, none will prove more interesting and enjoyable to the reader than the following, —

2d Mo. 15th, 1882.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *St. Nicholas*,— I have been much interested in reading "The Recollections of a Drummer Boy." In your last number he gives a sketch of the battle of Gettysburg, and in their return to Virginia he speaks of a town in the northern part of Virginia, by the name of Waterford. On seeing the name of that town, I called my mother's attention to it. She was very glad to see it mentioned, but was sorry that there was not more said about it. Mamma was born there, and lived there all through the war; and it was the greatest Union town in the South. Mamma says nobody loved the Union soldiers better than the people of Waterford. I should think *she* did, for she married one of them. Papa was a soldier in the army all through the war. He was at the battle of Gettysburg, too, but came through without a scratch, except the rheumatism which he got in prison and has had ever since. He was under the command of General Kilpatrick. But I must come to the object of my letter, and that is, whether in passing through Waterford he saw any girls handing out refreshments to the soldiers? Mamma was one of them. Please forward this to the Drummer Boy.

J. W. H.

N. Y. City.

To these inquiries a prompt reply was sent, relating some things about Waterford and our experiences in that region not contained in this book, and stating also that as for the young ladies "handing out refreshments to the soldiers," I had not seen them: that it was somehow our regimental misfortune always to be either too early or too late when such pleasant things came off: and that on this particular occasion we were probably too early, inasmuch as my regiment was at the head of the column when our command entered Waterford, and, I presume, the lemonade was not ready at that time. However, for his satisfaction, it was furthermore stated that, as we entered Waterford,

our drum corps being on the lead, a young lady who had been sitting on a porch in front of a house came down on the street and asked me "whether a certain New York regiment was with us," and that I had not the slightest doubt that that girl must have been his mamma, as she was a very beautiful girl indeed.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAINS AND PENALTIES.



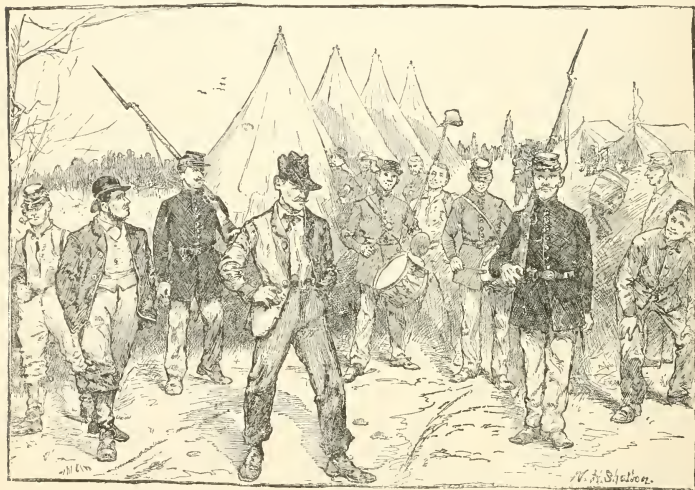
AMONG all civilized nations the "rules of war" seem to have been written with an iron hand. The laws by which the soldier in the field is governed are of necessity inexorable, for strict discipline is the chief excellence of an army, and a ready obedience the chief virtue of the soldier. Nothing can be more admirable in the character of the true soldier than his prompt and unquestioning response to the trumpet-call of duty. The world can never forget, nor ever sufficiently admire, a Leonidas, with his three hundred Spartans, at Thermopylæ, the Roman soldier on guard at the gates of the perishing Pompeii, or the gallant six hundred charging into the "valley of death" at Balaklava. Disobedience to orders is the great sin of the soldier, and one that is sure to be punished, for at no other time does Justice wear so stern and severe a look as when she sits enthroned amidst the camps of armed men.

In different sections of the army, various expedients were resorted to for the purpose of correcting minor offences. What particular shape the punishment should assume depended very much upon the inventive faculty of the Field and Staff, or of such officers of the line as might have charge of the case.

Before taking the field, a few citizen sneak thieves were discovered prowling amongst the tents. These were promptly drummed out of camp to the tune of the "Rogue's March," the whole regiment shout-

ing in derision as the miserable fellows took to their heels when the procession reached the limits of the camp, where they were told to begone, and never show their faces in camp any more, on pain of a more severe treatment.

If, as very seldom happened, it was an enlisted man who was caught stealing, he was often punished in the following way: A



DRUMMING SNEAK-THIEVES OUT OF CAMP.

barrel, having one end knocked out and a hole in the other large enough to allow one's head to go through, was slipped over the culprit's shoulders. On the outside of the barrel the word THIEF! was printed in large letters. In this dress he presented the ludicrous appearance of an animated meal barrel; for you could see nothing of him but his head and legs, his hands being very significantly confined. Sometimes he was obliged to stand or sit (as best he could) about the

guardhouse, or near by the colonel's quarters, all day long. At other times he was compelled to march through the company streets and make the tour of the camp under guard.

Once in the field, however, sneak thieves soon disappeared. Nor was there frequent occasion to punish the men for any other offences. Nearly, if not quite all of the punishments inflicted in the field were for disobedience in some form or other. Not that the men were wilfully disobedient. Far from it. They knew very well that they must obey, and that the value of their services was measured wholly by the quality of their obedience. It very rarely happened, even amid the greatest fatigue after a hard day's march, or in the face of the most imminent danger, that any one refused his duty. But after a long and severe march, a man is so completely exhausted that he is likely to become irritable, and to manifest a temper quite foreign to his usual habit. He is then not himself, and may in such circumstances do what at other times he would not think of doing.

Thus it once happened in my own company that one of the boys took it into his head to kick over the traces. We had had a long, hot day's march through Maryland, on the way down from Gettysburg, and were quite worn out. About midnight we halted in a clover field on a hillside, for rest and sleep. Corporal Harter, who was the only officer, commissioned or non-commissioned, that we had left to us after Gettysburg, called out, —

“John D——, report to the adjutant for camp guard.”

Now John, who was a German by the way, did not like the prospect of losing his sleep, and had to be summoned a second time before replying.

“Corporal, ich thu's es net!” (Corporal, I won't do it.)

Tired though we all were, we could not help laughing at the preposterous idea of a man daring to disobey the corporal. As the boys jerked off their accoutrements and began to spread down their

gum blankets on the fragrant clover, wet with the dew, they were greatly amused at this singular passage between John and the corporal.

"Come on, John. Don't make a Dutch dunce of yourself. You know you *must* go."

"Ich hab' dir g'sawt, ich thu's es net," (I have told you I won't do it,) insisted John.

"Pitch in, John!" shouted some one from his bed in the clover. "Give it to him in Dutch; that'll fetch him."

"Oh, hang it!" said the corporal. "Come on, man. What do you mean? You know you've got to go."

"Ich hab' dir zwei mohl g'sawt, ich thu's es gar net." (I have told you twice that I will certainly not do it.)

"Ha! ha! It beats the Dutch!" said some one.

"Something rotten in Denmark!" exclaimed another.

"Put him in the guard-house!" suggested a third, from under his gum blanket.

"Plague take the thing!" said the corporal, perplexed. "Pointer," continued he, "put on your accoutrements again, get your gun, and take John, under arrest, to the adjutant."

"Come on, John," said Pointer, buckling on his belt, "and be mighty quick about it, too. I don't want to stand about here arguing all night; I want to get to roost. Come along!"

The men leaned up on their elbows, in their beds on the clover, interested in knowing how John would take *that*.

"Well," said he, scratching his head, and taking his gun in hand, "Corporal, ich glaub' ich det besser geh." (Corporal, I guess I'd better go.)

"Yes," said Pointer, with a drawl, "I guess you 'besser' had, or the major 'll make short work with you and your Dutch. What in the name of General Jackson did you come to the army for, if you ain't agoing to obey orders?"

If while we were lying in camp a man refused his duty, he was at once haled to the guard-house, which is the military name for lockup. Once there, at the discretion of the officers, he was either simply confined, and put on bread and water, or maybe ordered to carry a log of wood, or a knapsack filled with stones, "two hours on and two off," day and night, until such time as he was deemed to have done sufficient penance. In more extreme cases a court-martial was held, and the penalty of forfeiture of all pay due, with hard labor for thirty days, or the like, was inflicted.

"Tying up by the thumb," was sometimes adopted. Down in front of Petersburg, out along the Weldon railroad, I once saw thirteen colored soldiers tied up by their thumbs at a time. Between two pine saplings a long pole had been thrown across and fastened at either end about seven feet from the ground. To this pole thirteen ropes had been attached at regular intervals, and to each rope a darkey was tied by the thumb in such a way that he could just touch the ground with his heel and keep the rope taut. If any one will try the experiment of holding up his arm in such a position for only five minutes, he will appreciate the force of the punishment of being tied up by the thumbs for a half day.

In some regiments they had a high wooden horse, which the offender was made to mount; and there he was kept for hours in a seat as conspicuous as it was uncomfortable.

One day, down in front of Petersburg, a number of us had been making a friendly call on some acquaintances over in another regiment. As we were returning home, we came across what we took to be a well, and wishing a drink we all stopped. The well in question, as was usual there, was nothing but a barrel sunk in the ground; for at some places the ground was so full of springs that, in order to get water, all you had to do was to sink a box or barrel, and the water would collect of its own accord. Stooping down and looking into the

well in question, Andy discovered a man standing in the well and baling out the water.

"What's he doing down there in that hole?" asked some one of our company.

"He says he's in the gopher-hole," said Andy, with a grin.

"Gopher-hole! What's a gopher-hole?"

"Why," said the guard, who was standing near by, and whom we had taken for the customary guard on the spring, "you see, comrades, our colonel has his own way of punishin' the boys. One thing he won't let 'em do — he won't let 'em get drunk. They may drink as much as they want, but they must not get drunk. If they do, they go into the gopher-hole. Jim, there, is in the gopher-hole now. That hole has a spring in the bottom, and the water comes in pretty fast; and if Jim wants to keep dry he's got to keep dippin' all the time, or else stand in the water up to his neck — and Jim isn't so mighty fond o' water neither."

Late in the fall of 1863, while we were lying in camp somewhere among the pine woods along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, we were one day marched out to witness the execution of a deserter. Instances of desertion to the enemy's lines were extremely rare with us; but whenever they occurred, the unfortunate offenders, if caught, were dealt with in the most summary manner, for the doom of the deserter is death.

The poor fellow who was to suffer the highest penalty of military law on the present occasion was, we were informed, a Maryland boy. Some months previously he had deserted his regiment for some cause or other, and had gone over to the enemy. Unfortunately for him, it happened that in one of the numerous skirmishes we were engaged in about that time, he was taken prisoner, in company with a number of Confederate soldiers. Unfortunately, also, for the poor fellow, it chanced that he was captured by the very company from which he had

deserted. The disguise of a Confederate uniform, which might have stood him in good stead had he fallen into any other hands, was now of no avail. He was at once recognized by his former comrades in arms, tried by court-martial, found guilty, and sentenced to be shot.

So, one October morning, orders came to the effect that the whole division was to turn out at one o'clock, to witness the execution of the sentence. I need hardly say that this was most unwelcome news. Nobody wished to see so sad a sight. Some of the men begged to be excused from attendance, and others could not be found when our drums beat the "assembly"; for none could well endure, as they said, "to see a man shot down like a dog." It was one thing to shoot a fellow mortal, or to see him shot, in battle; but this was quite a different thing. A squad of men had been detailed to shoot the poor fellow, Elias Foust, of our company, being among the number. But Elias, to his credit be it recorded, begged off, and had some one else appointed in his stead. One could not help but pity the men who were assigned to this most unpleasant duty, for if it be painful only to see a man shot, what must it not be to shoot him with your own hand? However, in condescension to this altogether natural and humane aversion to the shedding of blood, and in order to render the task as endurable as possible, the customary practice was observed:—On the morning of the execution an officer, who had been appointed for the purpose, took a number of rifles, some twelve or fourteen in number, and loaded all of them carefully with powder and ball, *except one*, this one being loaded with blank cartridge, that is, with powder only. He then mixed the guns so thoroughly that he himself could scarcely tell which guns were loaded with ball and which one was not. Another officer then distributed the guns to the men, not one of whom could be at all certain whether his particular gun contained a ball or not, and all of whom could avail themselves of the full benefit of the doubt in the case.

It was one of those peculiarly impressive autumn days when all that one sees or hears conspires to fill the mind with an indefinable feeling of sadness. There was the chirp of the cricket in the air, and the far-away chorus of the myriads of insects complaining that the year was done. There was all the impressiveness of a dull sky, a dreamy haze over the field, a yellow and brown tinge on the forest, accompanied by that peculiarly mournful wail of the breeze as it sighed and moaned dolefully among the branches of the pines, — all joining in chanting a requiem, it seemed to me, for the poor Maryland boy whose sands were fast running out.

At the appointed hour the division marched out and took position in a large field, or clearing, surrounded on all sides by pine woods. We were drawn up so as to occupy three sides of a great hollow square, two ranks deep and facing inward, the fourth side of the square, where we could see that a grave had been recently dug, being left open for the execution. Scarcely were we well in position, when there came to our ears, wafted by the sighing autumn wind, the mournful notes of the “Dead March.” Looking away in the direction whence the music came, we could see a long procession marching sadly and slowly to the measured stroke of the muffled drum. First came the band, playing the dirge; next, the squad of executioners; then a pine coffin, carried by four men; then the prisoner himself, dressed in black trousers and white shirt, and marching in the midst of four guards; then a number of men under arrest for various offences, who had been brought out for the sake of the moral effect it was hoped this spectacle might have upon them. Last of all came a strong guard.

When the procession had come up to the place where the division was formed, and had reached the open side of the hollow square, it wheeled to the left and marched all along the inside of the line, from the right to the left, the band still playing the dirge. The line was long, and the step was slow, and it seemed that they never would get

to the other end. But at long last, after having solemnly traversed the entire length of the three sides of the hollow square, the procession came to the open side of it, opposite to the point from which it had started. The escort wheeled off. The prisoner was placed before his coffin, which was set down in front of his grave. The squad of twelve or fourteen men who were to shoot the unfortunate man took position some ten or twelve yards from the grave, facing the prisoner, and a chaplain stepped out from the group of division officers near by, and prayed with and for the poor fellow a long, long time. Then the bugle sounded. The prisoner, standing proudly erect before his grave, had his eyes bandaged, and calmly folded his arms across his breast. The bugle sounded again. The officer in charge of the squad stepped forward. Then we heard the command, given as calmly as if on drill, —

“Ready!”

“Aim!”

Then, drowning out the third command, “Fire!” came a flash of smoke and a loud report. The surgeons ran up to the spot. The bands and drum corps of the division struck up a quickstep as the division faced to the right, and marched past the grave in order that in the dead form of its occupant we might all see that the doom of the deserter is death. It was a sad sight. As we moved along, many a rough fellow, from whom you would hardly have expected any sign of pity, pretending to be adjusting his cap so as to screen his eyes from the glare of the westering sun, could be seen furtively drawing his hand across his face and dashing away the tears that could not be kept from trickling down the bronzed and weatherbeaten cheek. As we marched off the field, we could not help being sensible of the harsh contrast between the lively music to which our feet were keeping step, and the fearfully solemn scene we had just witnessed. The transition from the “Dead March” to the quickstep was quite too sudden. A

deep solemnity pervaded the ranks as we marched homeward across the open field and into the sombre pine woods beyond, thinking, as we went, of the poor fellow's home, somewhere among the pleasant hills of Maryland, and of the sad and heavy hearts there would be there when it was known that he had paid the extreme penalty of the law.



CHAPTER XIV.

A TALE OF A SQUIRREL AND THREE BLIND MICE.

“ANDY, what is a shade-tail?”

We were encamped in an oak forest, on the eastern bank of the Rappahannock, late in the fall of 1863. We had built no winter quarters yet, although the nights were growing rather frosty, and had to content ourselves with our little “dog tents,” as we called our shelters, some dozen or so of which now constituted our company row. I had just come in from a trip through the woods, in quest of water at a spring near an old deserted log-house, about a half mile to the south of our camp, when, throwing down my heavy canteens, I made the above interrogatory of my chum.

Andy was lazily lying at full length on his back in the tent, reclining on a soft bed of pine branches, or “Virginia feathers,” as we called them, with his hands clasped behind his head, lustily singing, —

“Tramp, tramp, tramp! the boys are marching!
Cheer up, comrades, they will come!
And beneath the starry flag
We shall breathe the air again —”

“What’s that?” asked he, ceasing his song before finishing the stanza, and rising up on his elbow.

“I asked whether you could tell me what a shade-tail is?”

“A shade-tail! Never heard of it before. Don’t believe there is any such thing. I know what a bucktail is, though. There’s one,” said he, pulling a fine specimen out from under his knapsack. “That just came in the mail, while you were gone. The old buck that

chased the flies with that brush for many a year, was shot up among the Buffalo mountains last winter, and my father bought his tail of the man who killed him, and has sent it to me. It cost him just one dollar."

Bucktails were in great demand with us in those days, and happy indeed was the man who could secure so fine a specimen as Andy now proudly held in his hand.

"But isn't it rather large?" inquired I. "And it's nearly all white, and would make an excellent mark for some Johnny to shoot at, eh?"

"Never you fear for that. 'Old Trusty' up there," said he, pointing to his gun hanging along underneath the ridge-pole of the tent, — "'Old Trusty' and I will take care of Johnny Reb."

"But, Andy," continued I, "you haven't answered my question yet. What is a shade tail?"

"A shade tail," said he meditatively, — "how should I know? I know precious well what a *detail* is, though; and I'm on one for to-morrow. We go across the river to throw up breastworks."

"I forgot," said I, "that you have not studied Greek to any extent yet. If you live to get home and go back to school again at the old Academy, and begin to dig Greek roots in earnest, you will find that a shade tail is a — squirrel. For that is what the old Greeks called the bonny bush tail. Because, don't you see, when a squirrel sits up on a tree with his tail turned up over his back, he makes a shade for himself with his tail, and sits, as it were, under the shadow of his own vine and fig tree."

"Well," said Andy, "and what if he does? What's to hinder him?"

"Nothing," answered I, entering the tent and lying down beside him on the pile of Virginia feathers; "only I saw one out here in the woods as I came along, and I think I know where his nest is; and if

you and I can catch him, or, what would be better still, if we can capture one of his young ones, if he has any, why we might tame him and keep him for a pet. I've often thought it would be a fine thing for us to have a pet of some kind or other. Over in the Second Division there is one regiment that has a pet crow, and another has a kitten. They go with the men on all their marches, and they say that the kitten has actually been wounded in battle, and no doubt will be taken or sent up North some day and be a great curiosity. Now why couldn't we catch and tame a shade tail?"

"Yes," said Andy, becoming a little interested; "he could be taught to perch on Pointer's buck horns in camp, and could ride on your drum on the march."

Pointer, you must know, was the tallest man in the company, and therefore stood at the head of the line when the company was formed. When we enlisted, he brought with him a pair of deer antlers as an appropriate symbol for a Buck tail company, — no doubt with the intention of making both ends meet. Now the idea of having a live tame squirrel to perch on Pointer's buck horns was a capital one indeed.

But as the first thing to be done in cooking a hare is to catch the hare, so we concluded that the first thing to be done in taming a squirrel was to catch the squirrel. This gave us a world of thought. It would not do to shoot him. We could not trap him. After discussing the merits of smoking him out of his hole, we determined at last to risk cutting down the tree in which he had his home, and trying to catch him in a bag.

That afternoon, when we thought he would likely be at home taking a nap, having provided ourselves with an axe, an old oat bag, and a lot of tent rope, we cautiously proceeded to the old beech tree on the outskirts of the camp, where our intended pet had his home.

"Now, you see, Andy," said I, pointing up to a crotch in the tree, "up there is his front door; there he goes out and comes in. My plan is this: one of us must climb the tree and tie the mouth of the bag over that hole somehow, and come down. Then we will cut the tree down, and when it falls, if old shade tail is at home, like as not he'll run into the bag; and then, if we can be quick enough, we can tie a string around the bag, and there he is!"

Andy climbed the tree and tied the bag. After he had descended, we set vigorously to work at cutting down the beech. It took us about half an hour to make any serious inroad upon the tough trunk. But by and by we had the satisfaction of seeing the tree apparently shiver under our blows, and at last down it came with a crash.

We both ran toward the bag as fast as we could, ready to secure our prize; but we found, alas! that squirrels sometimes have two doors to their houses, and that while we had hoped to bag our bush tail at the front door, he had merrily skipped out the back way. For scarcely had the tree reached the ground, when we both beheld our intended pet leaping out of the branches and running up a neighboring tree as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Plague take it!" said Andy, wiping the perspiration from his face, "what shall we do now? I guess you'd better run to camp and get a little salt to throw on his tail."

"Never mind," said I, "we'll get him yet, see if we don't. I see him up there behind that old dry limb peeping out at us — there he goes!"

Sure enough, there he did go, from tree top to tree top, "lickerty skoot," as Andy afterward expressed it, and we after him, quite losing our heads, and shouting like Indians.

As ill luck would have it, our shade tail was making straight for the camp, on the outskirts of which he was discovered by one of the men, who instantly gave the alarm — "A squirrel! a squirrel!" In a

moment all the boys in camp not on duty came running pell-mell, Sergeant Kensill's black and tan terrier, Little Jim, of whom more anon, leading the way. I suppose there must have been about a hundred men together, and all yelling and shouting too, so that the poor squirrel checked his headlong course high up on the dead limb of a great old oak tree. Then, forming a circle around the tree, with "Little Jim" in the midst, the boys began to shout and yell as when on the charge, —

"Yi-yi-yi! Yi-yi-yi!"

Whereat the poor squirrel was so terrified, that, leaping straight up and out from his perch into open space, in sheer affright and despair, down he came tumbling, tail over head, into the midst of the circle, which rapidly closed about him as he neared the ground. With yells and cheers that made the wood ring, a hundred hands were stretched out as if to catch him as he came down. But Little Jim beat them all. True to his terrier blood and training, he suddenly leaped up like a shot, seized the squirrel by the nape of the neck, gave him a few angry shakes, which ended his agony, and carried him off triumphantly in his mouth to the tent of his owner, Sergeant Kensill, of Company F.

That evening, as we sat in our tent eating our fried hard-tack, Andy remarked, while sipping his coffee from his black tin cup, that if buck tails were as hard to catch as shade tails, they were well worth a dollar apiece any day; and that he believed a crow, or one of those young pigs we found running wild in the woods when we came to that camp, or something of that sort, would make a better pet than a squirrel.

"Well," said I, "we caught those pigs, anyhow, didn't we? But didn't they squeal! Fortunately, they were so much like oysters that they couldn't get away from us, and all found their way into our frying-pans at last."

"I fail to apprehend your meaning," said Andy, with mock gravity, setting down his black tin cup on the gum blanket. "By what right or authority, sir, do you presume to tell me that a pig is like an oyster?"

"Why, don't you see? A pig is like an oyster *because he can't climb a tree!* And that's the reason why we caught him."

"Bah!" exclaimed Andy; "that's a miserable joke, that is."

"Yet you must admit that it is a most happy circumstance that a pig cannot climb a tree, or we should have missed more than one good meal of fresh pork. Yet although we failed to make a pet of the squirrel because he *could* climb a tree, and of the pig because he *could not*, we shall make a pet of something or other yet. Of that I am certain."

It was some months later, and not until we were safely established in winter quarrers, that we finally succeeded in our purpose of having something to pet. I was over at brigade headquarters one day, visiting a friend who had charge of several supply wagons. Being present while he was engaged in overhauling his stores, I found in the bottom of a large box, in which blankets had been packed away, a whole family of mice. The father of the family promptly made his escape; the mother was killed in the capture, and one little fellow was so injured that he soon died; but the rest, three in number, I took out unhurt. As I laid them in the palm of my hand, they at once struck me as perfect little beauties. They were very young and quite small, being no larger than the end of my finger, with scarcely any fur on them, and their eyes quite shut. Putting them into my pocket, and covering them with some cotton which my friend gave me, I started home with my prize. Stopping at the surgeon's quarters on reaching camp, I begged a large empty bottle (which I afterward found had been lately filled with pulverized gum arabic), and somewhere secured an old tin can of the same diameter as the bottle. Then I got a strong

twine, went down to my tent, and asked Andy to help me make a cage for my pets, which with pride I took out of my pocket and set to crawling and nosing about on the warm blankets on the bunk.

“What are you going to do with that bottle?” inquired Andy.

“Going to cut it in two with this string,” said I, holding up my piece of twine.

“Can’t be done!” asserted he.

“Wait and see,” answered I.

Procuring a mess pan full of cold water, and placing it on the floor of the tent, near the bunk on which we were sitting, I wound the twine once around the bottle, a few inches from the bottom, in such a way that Andy could hold one end of the bottle and pull one end of the twine one way, while I held the other end of the bottle and pulled the other end of the twine the other way, thus causing the twine, by means of its rapid friction, to heat the bottle in a narrow, straight line all around. After sawing away in this style for several minutes, I suddenly plunged the bottle into the pan of cold water, when it at once snapped in two along the line where the twine had passed around it, and as clean and clear as if it had been cut by a diamond. Then, melting off the top of the old tin can by holding it in the fire, I fastened the body of the can on the lower end of the bottle. When finished, the whole arrangement looked like a large, long bottle, the upper part of which was glass and the lower tin. In this way I accomplished the double purpose of providing my pets with a dark chamber and a well-lighted apartment, at the same time preventing them from running away. Placing some cotton on the inside of both can and bottle, for a bed, and thrusting a small sponge, moistened with sweetened water, into the neck of the bottle, I then put my pets into their new home. Of course they could not see, for their eyes were not yet open; neither did they, at first, seem to know how to eat; but as necessity is the mother of invention, with mice as well as with

men, they soon learned to toddle forward to the neck of the bottle and suck their sweet sponge. In a short time they learned also to nibble at a bit of apple, and by and by could crunch their hard-tack like veritable veterans.

The bottle, as has already been said, had been filled with pulverized gum arabic. Some of this still adhering to the inside of the bottle, was gradually brushed off by their growing fur; and it was amusing to see the little things sit on their haunches and clean themselves of the sticky substance. Sometimes they would all three be busy at the same time, each at himself; and again, two of them would take to licking the third, rubbing their little red noses all over him, from head to tail, in the most amusing way imaginable.

Gradually, they grew very lively, and became quite tame, so that we could take them out of their house into our hands, and let them hunt about in our pockets for apple seeds or pieces of hard-tack. We called them Jack, Jill, and Jenny, and they seemed to know their names. When let out of their cage occasionally, for a romp on the blankets, they would climb over everything, running along the inner edge of the eave boards and the ridgepole, but never succeeded in getting away from us. It was a comical sight to see little Jim come in to look at them. A mouse was almost the highest possible excitement to Jim, for a mouse was second-cousin to a rat, no doubt, as Jim looked at matters; and just say "rats!" to Jim, if you wanted to see him jump! He would come in and look at our pets, turn his head from one side to the other, and wrinkle his brow, and whine and bark; but we were determined he should not kill our mousies, as he had killed our shade tail a few months before.

What to do with our pets when spring came on, and winter quarters were nearly at an end, we knew not. We could not take them along on the march, neither did we like to leave them behind; for it seemed cruel to leave Jack, Jill, and Jenny in the deserted and

dismantled camp to go back to the barbarous habits of their ancestors. On consideration, therefore, we concluded to take them back to the wagon train, and leave them with the wagoner, who, though at first he demurred to our proposal, at last consented to let us turn them loose among his oat bags, where I doubt not they had a merry time indeed.

CHAPTER XV.

“THE PRIDE OF THE REGIMENT.”

THE pet-making disposition which had led Andy and me to take so much trouble with our mice was not confined to ourselves alone. The disposition was quite natural, and therefore very general among the men of all commands. Pets of any and all kinds, whether chosen from the wild or the domestic animals, were everywhere in great esteem, and happy was the regiment which possessed a tame crow, squirrel, coon, or even a kitten.

Our own regiment possessed a pet of great value and high esteem in Little Jim, of whom some incidental mention has already been made. As Little Jim enlisted with the regiment, and was honorably mustered out of the service with it at the close of the war, after three years of as faithful service as so little a creature as he could render the flag of his country, some brief account of him here may not be out of place.

Little Jim, then, was a small rat terrier, of fine blooded stock, his immediate maternal ancestor having won a silver collar in a celebrated rat pit in Philadelphia. Late in 1859, while yet a pup, he was given by a sailor friend to John C. Kensill, with whom he was mustered into the United States service “for three years, or during the war,” on Market Street, Philadelphia, Pa., late in August, 1862. Around his neck was a silver collar with the inscription, — “Jim Kensill, Co. F, 150th Regt. P. V.”

He soon came to be a great favorite with the boys, not only of his own company, but of the entire regiment as well, the men of the dif

ferent companies thinking quite as much of him as if he belonged to each of them individually, and not to Sergeant Kensill, of Company F, alone. On the march he would be caught up from the roadside where he was doggedly trotting along, and given a ride on the arms of the men, who would pet him and talk to him as if he were a child and not a dog. In winter quarters, however, he would not sleep anywhere except on Kensill's arm and underneath the blankets; nor was he ever known to spend a night away from home. On first taking the field, rations were scarce with us, and for several days fresh meat could not be had for poor Jim, and he nearly starved. Gradually, however, his master taught him to take a hard-tack between his fore paws, and, holding it there, to munch and crunch at it till he had consumed it. He soon learned to like hard-tack, and grew fat on it, too. On the march to Chancellorsville he was lost for two whole days, to the great grief of the men. When his master learned that he had been seen with a neighboring regiment, he had no difficulty in finding volunteers to accompany him when he announced that he was about to set out for the recapture of Jim. They soon found where he was. Another regiment had possession of him, and laid loud and angry claim to him; but Kensill and his men were not to be frightened, for he knew the Buck tails were at his back, and that sooner than give up Little Jim there would be some rough work. As soon as Jim heard his master's sharp whistle, he came bounding and barking to his side, overjoyed to be at home again, albeit he had lost his silver collar, which his thievish captors had cut from his neck, in order the better to lay claim to him.

He was a good soldier too, being no coward, and caring not a wag of his tail for the biggest shells the Johnnies could toss over at us. He was with us under our first shell fire at "Clarke's Mills," a few miles below Fredericksburg, in May, 1863, and ran barking after the very first shell that came screaming over our heads. When the shell had

buried itself in the ground, Jim went up close to it, crouching down on all fours, while the boys cried "Rats! rats! Shake him, Jim! Shake him, Jim!" Fortunately, that first shell did not explode, and when others came that did explode, Jim, with true military instinct, soon learned to run after them and bark, but to keep a respectful distance from them.

On the march to Gettysburg he was with us all the way, but when we came near the enemy, his master sent him back to William Wiggins, the wagoner; for he thought too much of Jim to run the risk of losing him in battle. It was a pity Jim was not with us out in front of the Seminary the morning of the first day, when the fight opened; for as soon as the cannon began to boom, the rabbits began to run in all directions, as if scared quite out of their poor little wits; and there would have been fine sport for Jim with the cotton tails, had he only been there to give them chase.

In the first day's fight, Jim's owner, Sergeant John C. Kensill, while bravely leading the charge for the recapture of the 149th Pennsylvania Regiment's battle flags, of which some brief account has been elsewhere given, was wounded and left for dead on the field, with a bullet through his head. He, however, so far recovered from his wound that in the following October he rejoined the regiment, which was then lying down along the Rappahannock somewhere. In looking for the regiment, on his return from a Northern hospital, Sergeant Kensill chanced to pass the supply train, and saw Jim busy at a bone under a wagon. Hearing the old familiar whistle, Jim at once looked up, saw his master, left his bone, and came leaping and barking in greatest delight to his owner's arm.

On the march he was sometimes sent back to the wagon. Once he came near being killed. To keep him from following the regiment or from straying and getting lost in search of it, the wagoner had tied him to the rear axle of his wagon with a strong twine. In crossing a

stream, in his anxiety to get his team over safely, the wagoner forgot all about poor little Jim, who was dragged and slashed through the waters in a most unmerciful way. After getting safely over the stream, the teamster, looking back, found poor Jim under the rear of the wagon, being dragged along by the neck, more dead than alive. He was then put on the sick list for a few days; but with this single exception he had never a mishap of any kind, and was always ready for duty.

His master having been honorably discharged before the close of the war because of wounds, Jim was left with the regiment in care of Wiggins, the wagoner. When the regiment was mustered out of service at the end of the war, Little Jim was mustered out too. He stood up in rank with the boys and wagged his tail for joy that peace had come and that we were all going home. I understand that his discharge papers were regularly made out, the same as those of the men, and that they read somewhat as follows, —

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: KNOW ye that *Jim Kensill*, Private, Company F, 150th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, who was enrolled on the twenty-second day of August, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-two, to serve three years, or during the war, is hereby DISCHARGED from the service of the United States, this twenty-third day of June, 1865, at Elmira, New York, by direction of the Secretary of War.

(No objection to his being re-enlisted is known to exist.)

Said *Jim Kensill* was born in Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, is six years of age, six inches high, dark complexion, black eyes, black and tan hair, and by occupation, when enrolled, a Rat Terrier.

Given at Elmira, New York, this twenty-third day of June, 1865.

JAMES R. REID,

CAPT. TENTH U. S. INFANTRY, A.C.M.

Before parting with him, the boys bought him a silver collar, which they had suitably inscribed with his name, regiment, and the principal

engagements in which he had participated. This collar, which he had honorably earned in the service of his country in war, he proudly wore in peace to the day of his death.

Although not pertaining to the writer's own personal recollections, there yet may be appropriately introduced here some brief mention of another pet, who, from being "the pride of his regiment," gradually arose to the dignity of national fame. I mean "Old Abe," the war eagle of the Eighth Wisconsin Volunteers.

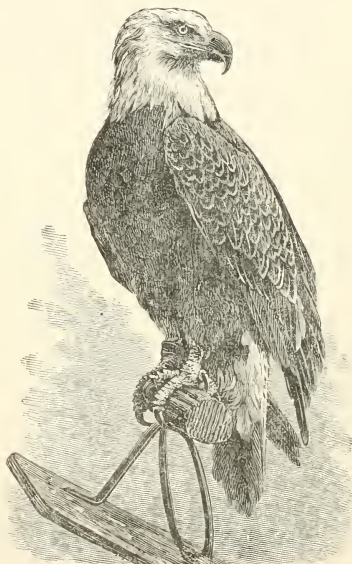
Whoever it may have been that first conceived the idea, it was certainly a happy thought to make a pet of an eagle. For the eagle is our national bird, and to carry an eagle along with the colors of a regiment on the march, and in battle, and all through the whole war, was surely very appropriate indeed.

"Old Abe's" perch was on a shield, which was carried by a soldier, to whom, and to whom alone, he looked as to a master. He would not allow any one to carry, or even to handle him except this soldier, nor would he ever receive his food from any other person's hands. He seemed to have sense enough to know that he was sometimes a burden to his master on the march, however, and, as if to relieve him, would occasionally spread his wings and soar aloft to a great height, the men of all regiments along the line of march cheering him as he went up. He regularly received his rations from the commissary, the same as any enlisted man. Whenever fresh meat was scarce, and none could be found for him by foraging parties, he would take things into his own claws, as it were, and go out on a foraging expedition himself. On some such occasions he would be gone two or three days at a time, during which nothing whatever was seen of him; but he would invariably return, and seldom came back without a young lamb or a chicken in his talons. His long absences occasioned his regiment not

the slightest concern, for the men knew that though he might fly many miles away in quest of food, he would be quite sure to find them again.

In what way he distinguished the two hostile armies so accurately that he was never once known to mistake the gray for the blue, no one can tell. But so it was, that he was never known to alight save in his own camp, and amongst his own men.

At Jackson, Mississippi, during the hottest part of the battle before that city, “Old Abe” soared up into the air, and remained there from early morning until the fight closed at night, having, no doubt, greatly enjoyed his bird’s-eye view of the battle. He did the same at Mission Ridge. He was, I believe, struck by the enemy’s bullets two or three times; but his feathers were so thick, that his body was not much hurt. The shield on which he was carried, however, showed so many marks of the enemy’s balls that it looked on top as if a groove plane had been run over it.



“OLD ABE.”

At the Centennial celebration held in Philadelphia, in 1876, “Old Abe” occupied a prominent place on his perch on the west side of the nave in the Agricultural building. He was still alive, though evidently growing old, and was the observed of all observers. Thousands

of visitors, from all sections of the country, paid their respects to the grand old bird, who, apparently conscious of the honors conferred upon him, overlooked the sale of his biography and photographs going on beneath his perch with entire satisfaction.

As was but just and right, the soldier who had carried him during the war continued to have charge of him after the war was over, until the day of his death, which occurred at the Capitol of Michigan in 1881.

Proud as the Wisconsin boys justly were of "Old Abe," the Twelfth Indiana Regiment possessed a pet of whom it may be truly said, that he enjoyed a renown scarcely second to that of the wide-famed war eagle. This was "Little Tommy," as he was familiarly called in those days,—the youngest drummer-boy, and, so far as the writer's knowledge goes, the youngest enlisted man in the Union Army. The writer well remembers having seen him on several occasions. His diminutive size and childlike appearance, as well as his remarkable skill and grace in handling the drumsticks, never failed to make an impression on the beholder. Some brief and honorable mention of "Little Tommy," the pride of the Twelfth Indiana Regiment, may with propriety find a place in these "Recollections of a Drummer-Boy."

Thomas Hubler was born in Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana, October 9, 1851. When two years of age, the family removed to Warsaw, Indiana. On the outbreak of the war, his father, who had been a German soldier of the truest type, raised a company of men, in response to President Lincoln's first call for seventy-five thousand troops. "Little Tommy" was among the first to enlist in his father's company, the date of enrollment being April 19, 1861. He was then nine years and six months old.

The regiment to which the company was assigned was with the Army of the Potomac throughout all its campaigns in Maryland and

Virginia. At the expiration of its term of service, in August, 1862, "Little Tommy" re-enlisted, and served to the end of the war, having been present in some twenty-six battles in all. He was greatly beloved by all the men of his regiment, and was a constant favorite amongst them. It is thought that he beat the first "long roll" of the great Civil War. He is still living in Warsaw, Indiana, and bids fair to be the latest survivor of the great and grand army of which he was the youngest member. With the swift advancing years the ranks of the soldiers of the late war are being rapidly thinned out, and those who yet remain are showing signs of age. The "Boys in Blue" are thus, as the years go by, almost imperceptibly turning into the "Boys in Gray"; and as "Little Tommy," the youngest of them all, sounded their first reveille, so may he yet live to beat their last tattoo.



CHAPTER XVI.

AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

WHAT glorious camp-fires we used to have in the fall of the year 1863! It makes one rub his hands together yet just to think of them. The nights were getting cold and frosty, so that it was impossible to sleep under our little shelters with comfort; and so half the night was spent around the blazing fires at the ends of the company streets.

I always took care that there should be a blazing good fire for our little company, anyhow. My duties were light, and left me time, which I found I could spend with pleasure in swinging an axe. Hickory and white oak saplings were my favorites; and with these cut into lengths of ten feet, and piled up as high as my head on wooden fire-dogs, what a glorious crackle we would have by midnight! Go out there what time of night you might please,—and you were pretty sure to go out to the fire three or four times a night, for it was too bitterly cold to sleep in the tent more than an hour at a stretch,—you would always find a half dozen of the boys sitting about the fire, on logs, smoking their pipes, telling yarns, or singing odd catches of songs. As I recall those weird night scenes of army life,—the blazing fire, the groups of swarthy men gathered about, the thick darkness of the forest, where the lights and shadows danced and played all night long, and the rows of little white tents, covered with frost,—it looks quite poetical in the retrospect; but I fear it was sometimes prosy enough in the reality.

“If you fellows would stop your everlasting arguing, there, and go out and bring in some wood, it would be a good deal better; for

if we don't have a big camp-fire to-night we'll freeze in this snow-storm.

So saying, Pointer threw down the but end of a pine sapling he had been half dragging, half carrying, out of the woods in the edge of which we were to camp, and, axe in hand, fell to work at it with a will.

There was, indeed, some need of following Pointer's good advice, for it was snowing fast and was bitterly cold. It was Christmas Eve, 1863, and here we were, with no protection but our little shelters, pitched on the hard, frozen ground.

Why did we not build winter quarters, do you ask? Well, we had already built two sets of winter quarters, and had been ordered out of them in both instances, to take part in some expedition or other; and it was a little hard to be houseless and homeless at this merry season of the year, when folks up North were having such happy times, wasn't it? But it is wonderful how elastic the spirits of a soldier are, and how jolly he can be under the most adverse circumstances.

"Well, Pointer, they hadn't any business to put me out of the mess. That was a mean trick, any way you take it."

"If we hadn't put you out of our mess you'd have eaten up our whole box from home in one night. He's an awful glutton, Pointer."

"Say, boys! I move we organize ourselves into a court, and try this case," said Sergeant Cummings. "They've been arguing and arguing about this thing the whole day, and it's time to take it up and put an end to it. The case is—let's see, what'll we call it? I'm not a very good hand at the legal lingo, but I suppose if we call it a 'motion to quash a writ of ejectment,' or something of that sort, we'll be within the lines of the law. Let me now state the case: *Shell versus Diehl and Hottenstein*. These three, all members of Company D, after having lived, messed, and sojourned together

peaceably for a year or more, have had of late some disagreement, quarrel, squabble, fracas, or general tearing out, the result of which said disagreement, quarrel, squabble, et cetery, et cetery, has been that the hereinbefore mentioned Shell has been thrown out of the mess, and left to the cold charities of the camp; and he, the said Shell, now lodges a due and formal complaint before this honorable court, presently sitting on this pile of pine brush, and humbly prays and petitions reinstatement in his just rights and claims, *sine qua non, e pluribus unum, pro bono publico!*

“Silence in the court!”

To organize ourselves into a court of justice was a matter of a few moments. Cummings was declared judge, Ruhl and Ransom his assistants. A jury of twelve men, good and true, was speedily impannelled. Attorneys and tipstaves, sheriff and clerk were appointed, and in less time than it takes to narrate it, there we were, seated on piles of pine brush around a roaring camp-fire, with the snow falling fast, and getting deeper every hour, trying the celebrated case of “Shell *versus* Diehl and Hottenstein.” And a world of merriment we had out of it, you may well believe. When the jury, after having retired for a few moments behind a pine tree, brought in a verdict for the plaintiff, it was full one o’clock on Christmas morning, and we began to drop off to sleep, some rolling themselves up in their blankets and overcoats, and lying down, Indian fashion, feet to the fire; while others crept off to their cold shelters under the snow-laden pine trees for what poor rest they could find, jocularly wishing one another a “Merry Christmas!”

Time wore away monotonously in the camp we established there, near Culpeper Courthouse. All the more weary a winter was it for me because I was so sick that I could scarcely drag myself about. So miserable did I look, that one day a Company B boy said, as I was passing his tent, —

"Young mon, 'an if ye don't be afther pickin' up a bit, it's my opinion ye'll be gathered home to your fathers purty soon."

I was sick with the same disease which slew more men than fell in actual battle. We had had a late fall campaign, and



CHRISTMAS EVE AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

had suffered much from exposure, of which one instance may suffice, —

We had been sent into Thoroughfare Gap to hold that mountain pass. Breaking camp there at daylight in a drenching rain, we marched all day long, through mud up to our knees, and soaked

to the skin by the cold rain; at night we forded a creek waist deep, and marched on with clothes frozen almost stiff; at one o'clock the next morning we lay down utterly exhausted, shivering helplessly, in wet clothes, without fire, and exposed to the northwest wind that swept the vast plain, keen and cold as a razor. Whoever visits the Soldier's Cemetery near Culpeper will there find a part of the sequel of that night march; the remainder is scattered far and wide over the hills of Virginia, and in forgotten places among the pines.

Could we have had home care and home diet, many would have recovered. But what is to be done for a sick man whose only choice of diet must be made from pork, beans, sugar, and hard-tack? Home? Ah yes, if we only *could* get home for a month! Homesick? Well, no, not exactly. Still we were not entire strangers to the feelings of that poor recruit who was one day found by his lieutenant sitting on a fallen pine tree in the woods, crying as if his heart would break.

"Why," said the lieutenant, "what are you crying for, you big baby, you?"

"I wish I was in my daddy's barn, boo, hoo!"

"And what would you do if you were?"

The poor fellow replied between his sobs: "Why, if I was in my daddy's barn, *I'd go into the house mighty quick!*"

Now that I am speaking of homesickness, I must relate an instance of it which struck me as most ludicrous at the time, and of which I can hardly even yet think without a broad smile. The occurrence had somehow entirely slipped my memory, until it was fortunately recalled one evening at a social gathering, a small "Camp-Fire," as it were, of some half dozen of the members of our company. We had been holding "Memorial Day" services in my native town, and in the evening after



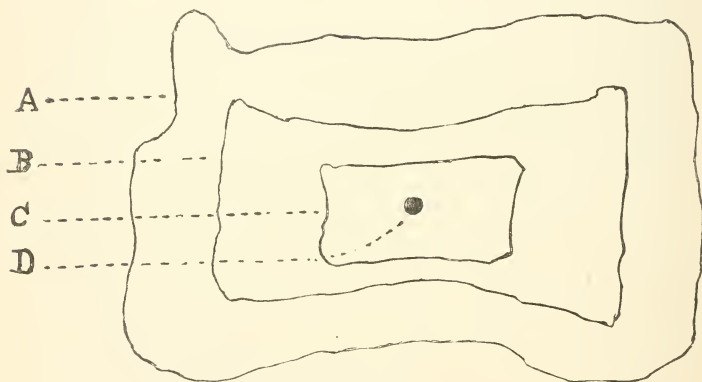
the services were over, some half dozen of our old boys gathered at the house of Comrade Albert Foster, where we had a good supper, and a good time after supper talking of army life.

"Do any of you boys know anything about Cal Wirt?" asked Pete Grove. "I'd like to hear some-



thing of him once. Harry, you must certainly remember Cal Wirt?

"Cal Wirt?" said I, "let me see. Wasn't he with us when—Ah, yes! now I remember him quite well. And now that you have recalled him to my memory, I must tell you a story which the mention of his name recalls vividly to my mind, though



CAL WIRT'S MAP OF THE WAR.

A—The United States.
C—Union County.

B—Pennsylvania.
D—Lewisburg.

I had forgotten quite all about it until this moment. Did any of you boys hear of, or do you remember anything about 'Cal Wirt's map of the War?'"

"Let's have it, Harry," exclaimed they, all at once.

"Well, I cannot exactly recall when and where it was that he drew it, probably after Gettysburg when we had gone back again into Virginia. We were all feeling rather badly then, low spirited and a little homesick on turning our backs upon our native state.

“Besides, we had very little to eat about that time, except blackberries. We were camped down about Warrenton, somewhere, and Cal was sitting, moody and silent, one evening about the camp fire whittling a stick. At length, getting up, and giving his trousers a jerk at the waist, as is the habit of some men, he took the stick he had been sharpening to a careful point, and stepping into the middle of the smooth and hard-beaten company street, began to draw an immense, irregular, rectangular figure on the ground.

“‘Hello, Cal,’ said some one, ‘what’s up now? Goin’ to play hopscotch? Should have thought you’d ‘a had enough hoppin’ around after the Johnnies this summer, without tryin’ to limber your legs in that fashion.’

“‘Oh, no,’ said another, ‘Cal didn’t hop *after* the Johnnies so much as he hopped *away from* them!’”

“But, notwithstanding all the jibes and jeers of the boys, Cal went on with his drawing, as if intent on the solution of some intricate geometrical problem, tracing on the ground an immense, irregular rectangle, which occupied the full width and half the length of the company street. Within this he described another similar but somewhat smaller figure, within this another, and in the centre of this last he made a deeply dented dot.

“The boys began to gather about Cal in a group, curious to learn ‘what in the name of General Jackson he was up to, anyway.’ He soon relieved their minds.

“‘Now, poys,’ said Cal, as he straightened himself up as if to make a speech—in rather broken English—‘Now, poys, I tell you what. Dis here is a map of de war. Dis here great figger is de United Shtates; de next one on de inside of dat is Pennsylvany; dat one on de inside of Pennsylvany is goot old Union Gounty’—and then, pausing for a moment and making

a wry face, he brought down his sharpened stick with a sudden and desperate thrust at the point of the dot in the illustration, fell on his knees, folded his hands, rolled up his eyes, and, with a most ludicrous and wobegone expression of countenance and voice, exclaimed, —

“Und dat, poys, dat is Lewisburg, — *und O mine himmel, if I was only dere!*”

CHAPTER XVII.

OUR FIRST DAY IN "THE WILDERNESS."

AT last the long winter, with its deep snows and intense cold, was gone, and on May 4, 1864, at four o'clock in the morning, we broke camp. In what direction we should march, whether north, south, east, or west, none of us had the remotest idea; for the pickets reported the Rapidan River so well fortified by the enemy on the farther bank, that it was plainly impossible for us to break their lines at any point there. But in those days we had a general who had no such word as "impossible" in his dictionary, and under his leadership we marched that May morning straight for and straight across the Rapidan, in solid column. All day we plodded on, the road strewn with blankets and overcoats, of which the army lightened itself now that the campaign was opening; and at night we halted, and camped in a beautiful green meadow.

Not the slightest suspicion had we, as we slept quietly there that night, of the great battle, or rather series of great battles, about to open on the following day. Even on that morrow, when we took up the line of march and moved leisurely along for an hour or two, we saw so few indications of the coming struggle, that, when we suddenly came upon a battery of artillery in position for action by the side of the road, some one exclaimed, —

"Why, hello, fellows! that looks like business!"

Only a few moments later, a staff officer rode up to our regiment and delivered his orders, —

"Major, you will throw forward your command as skirmishers for the brigade."

The regiment at once moved into the thick pine woods, and was lost to sight in a moment, although we could hear the bugle clanging out its orders, "deploy to right and left," as the line forced its way through the tangled and interminable "Wilderness."

Ordered back by the major into the main line of battle, we drummer-boys found the troops massed in columns along a road, and we lay down with them among the bushes. How many men were there we could not tell. Wherever we looked, whether up or down the road, and as far as the eye could reach, were masses of men in blue. Among them was a company of Indians, dark, swarthy, stolid-looking fellows, dressed in our uniform, and serving with some Iowa regiment, under the command of one of their chiefs as captain.

But hark !

"Pop ! Pop ! Pop-pop-pop !" The pickets are beginning to fire, the "ball is going to open," and things will soon be getting lively.

A venturesome fellow climbs up a tall tree to see what he can see, and presently comes scrambling down, reporting nothing in sight but signal flags flying over the tree tops, and beyond them nothing but woods and woods for miles.

Orderlies are galloping about, and staff officers are dashing up and down the line, or forcing their way through the tangled bushes, while out on the skirmish line is the ever-increasing rattle of the musketry, —

"Pop-pop ! Pop-pop-pop !"

"Fall in, men ! Forward, guide right !"

There is something grand in the promptitude with which the order is obeyed. Every man is at his post. Forcing its way as best it can through the tangled undergrowth of briars and bushes, across ravines and through swamps, our whole magnificent line advances, until, after a half-hour's steady work, we reach the skirmish line, which, hardly pressed, falls back into the advancing column of blue as it

reaches a little clearing in the forest. Now we see the lines of gray in the edge of the woods on the other side of the little field; first their pickets behind clumps of bushes, then the solid column appearing behind the fence, coming on yelling like demons, and firing a volley that fills the air with smoke and cuts it with whistling lead. Sheltered behind the trees, our line reserves its fire, for it is likely that the enemy will come out on a charge, and then we'll mow them down!

With bayonets fixed, and yells that make the woods ring, here they come, boys, through the clearing, on a dead run! And now, as you love the flag that waves yonder in the breeze, up, boys, and let them have it! Out from our Enfields flashes a sheet of flame, before which the lines of gray stagger for a moment; but they recover and push on, then reel again and quail, and at length fly before the second leaden tempest, which sweeps the field clear to the opposite side.

With cheers and shouts of "Victory!" our line, now advancing swiftly from behind its covert of the trees, sweeps into and across the clearing, driving back the enemy into the woods from which they had so confidently ventured.

The little clearing over which the lines of blue are advancing is covered with dead and dying and wounded men, among whom I find Lieutenant Stannard, of my acquaintance.

"Harry, help me! quick! I'm bleeding fast. Tear off my suspender, or take my handkerchief and tie it as tight as you can draw it around my thigh, and help me off the field."

Ripping up the leg of his trousers with my knife, I soon check the flow of blood with a hard knot,—and none too soon, for the main artery has been severed. Calling a comrade to my assistance, we succeed in reaching the woods, and make our way slowly to the rear in search of the division hospital.

Whoever wishes to know something of the terrible realities of war

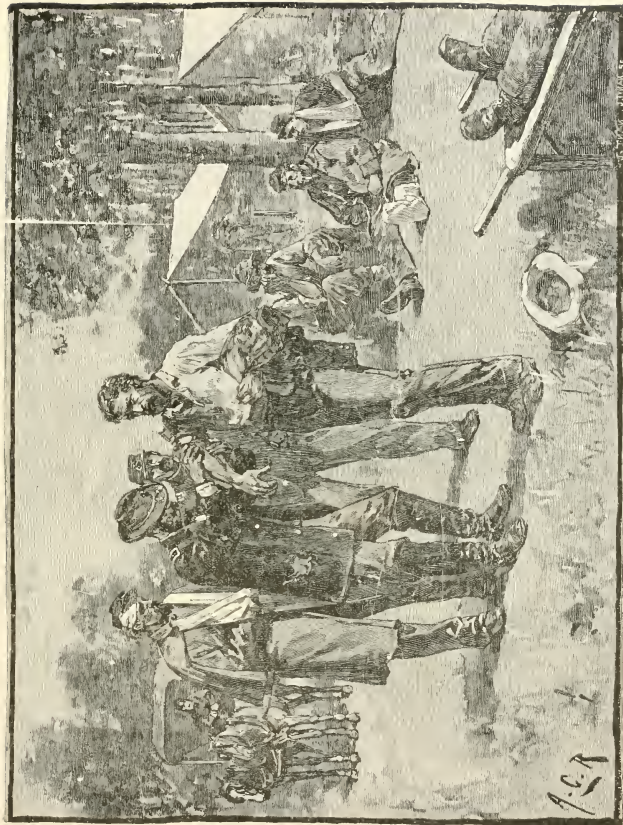
should visit a field hospital during some great engagement. No doubt my young readers imagine war to be a great and glorious thing ; and so, indeed, in many regards it is. It would be idle to deny that there is something stirring in the sound of martial music, something strangely uplifting and intensely fascinating in the roll of musketry and the loud thunder of artillery. Besides, the march and the battle afford opportunities for the unfolding of manly virtue ; and as things go in this disjointed world, human progress seems to be almost impossible without war.

Yet still, war is a terrible, a horrible thing. If my young readers could have been with us as we helped poor Stannard off the field that first day in "the Wilderness" ; if they could have seen the surgeons of the first division of our corps as we saw them, when passing by with the lieutenant on a stretcher, — they would, I think, agree with me, that if war is a necessity, it is a dreadful necessity. There were the surgeons, busy at work, while dozens of poor fellows were lying all around on stretchers, awaiting their turns.

"Hurry on, boys, hurry on ! Don't stop here ; I can't stand it !" groaned our charge.

So we pushed on with our burden, until we saw our division colors over in a clearing among the pines, and on reaching this we came upon a scene that I can never adequately describe.

There were hundreds of the wounded already there ; other hundreds, perhaps thousands, were yet to come. On all sides, within and just without the hastily erected hospital tents, were the severely and dangerously wounded, while great numbers of slightly wounded men, with hands or feet bandaged or heads tied up, were lying about the sides of the tents or out among the bushes. The surgeons were everywhere busy, — here dressing wounds ; there, alas ! stooping down to tell some poor fellow, over whose countenance the pallor of death was already spreading, that there was no longer any hope for him ; and



A SCENE IN THE FIELD-HOSPITAL.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATION

down yonder, about a row of tables, each under a fly,¹ stood groups of them, ready for their dreadful, and yet helpful work.

To one of these groups we carried poor Stannard, and I stood by and watched. The sponge saturated with chloroform was put to his face, rendering him unconscious while the operation of tying the severed artery was performed. On a neighboring table was a man whose leg was being taken off at the thigh, and who, chloroformed into unconsciousness, interested everybody by singing, at the top of his voice, and with a clear articulation, five verses of a hymn, to an old-fashioned Methodist tune, never once losing the melody nor stopping for a word. I remember seeing another poor fellow with his arm off at the shoulder, lying on the ground and resting after the operation. He appeared to be very much amused at himself, because (he said, in answer to my inquiry as to what he was laughing at) he had felt a fly on his right hand, and when he went to brush it off with his left there was no right hand there any more! I remember, too, seeing a tall prisoner brought in and laid on the table, — a magnificent specimen of physical development; erect, well built, and strong looking, and with a countenance full of frank and sturdy manliness. As the wounded prisoner was stretched out on the table, the surgeon said, —

"Well, Johnny, my man, what is the matter with you, and what can we do for you to-day?"

"Well, doctor, your people have used me rather rough to-day. In the first place, there's something down in here," feeling about his throat, "that troubles me a good deal."

Opening his shirt collar, the surgeon found a deep-blue mark an inch or more below the "Adam's apple." On pressing the blue lump

¹ A piece of canvas, stretched over a pole and fastened to tent pins by long ropes having no walls, it admits light on all sides.

a little with the fingers, out popped a minie ball, which had lodged just beneath the skin.

"Lucky for you that this was a 'spent ball,' Johnny," said the surgeon, holding the bullet between his fingers.

"Give me that, doctor, give me that ball; I want it," said Johnny, eagerly reaching out his left hand for the ball. Then he carefully examined it, and put it away into his jacket pocket.

"And now, doctor, there's something else, you see, the matter with me, and something more serious, too, I'm afraid. You see, I can't use my right arm. The way was this: we were having a big fight out there in the woods. In the bayonet charge I got hold of one of your flags, and was waving it, when all on a sudden I got an ugly clip in the arm here, as you see."

"Never mind, Johnny. We shall treat you just the same as our own boys, and though you are dressed in gray you shall be cared for as faithfully as if you were dressed in blue, until you are well and strong again."

Never did I see a more delighted or grateful man than he, when, awakened from his deep chloroform sleep, he was asked whether he did not think his arm had better come off now?

"Just as you think best, doctor."

"Look at your arm once, Johnny."

What was his glad surprise to find that the operation had been already performed, and that a neat bandage was wound about his shoulder!

The most striking illustration of the power of religion to sustain a man in trial and distress, I saw there in that field hospital.

We had carried Stannard into a tent, and laid him on a pile of pine boughs, where, had he only been able to keep quiet, he would have done well enough. But he was not able to keep quiet. A more restless man I never saw. Although his wound was not considered

necessarily dangerous, yet he was evidently in great fear of death, and for death, I grieve to say, he was not at all prepared. He had been a wild, wayward man, and now that he thought the end was approaching, he was full of alarm. As I bent over him, trying my best, but in vain, to comfort and quiet him, my attention was called to a man on the other side of the tent, whose face I thought I knew, in spite of its unearthly pallor.

"Why, Smith," said I, "is this you? Where are you hurt?"

"Come turn me around and see," he said.

Rolling him over carefully on his side, I saw a great, cruel wound in his back.

My countenance must have expressed alarm when I asked him, as quietly as I could, whether he knew that he was very seriously wounded, and might die.

Never shall I forget the look that man gave me, as, with a strange light in his eye, he said, —

"I am in God's hands, I am not afraid to die."

Two or three days after that, while we were marching on rapidly in column again, we passed an ambulance train filled with wounded on their way to Fredericksburg. Hearing my name called by some one, I ran out of line to an ambulance, in which I found Stannard.

"Harry, for pity's sake, have you any water?"

"No, lieutenant; I'm very sorry, but there's not a drop in my canteen, and there's no time now to get any."

It was the last time I ever saw him. He was taken to Fredericksburg, submitted to a second operation, and died; and I have always believed that his death was largely owing to want of faith.

Six months, or maybe a year, later, Smith came back to us with a great white scar between his shoulders, and I doubt not he is alive and well to this day.

And there was Jimmy Lucas too. They brought him in about the

middle of that same afternoon, two men bearing him on their arms. He was so pale, that I knew at a glance he was severely hurt. "A ball through the lungs," they said, and "he can't live." Jimmy was one of my own company, from my own village. We had been school-fellows and playmates from childhood almost, and you may well believe it was sad work to kneel down by his side and watch his slow and labored breathing, looking at his pallid features, and thinking—ah, yes, that was the saddest of all!—of those at home. He would scarcely let me go from him a moment, and when the sun was setting, he requested every one to go out of the tent, for he wanted to speak a few words to me in private. As I bent down over him, he gave me his message for his father and mother, and a tender good by to his sweetheart, begging me not to forget a single word of it all if ever I should live to see them; and then he said, —

"And Harry, tell father and mother I thank them now for all their care and kindness in trying to bring me up well and in the fear of God. I know I have been a wayward boy sometimes, but my trust is in him who said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' My hope is in God, and I shall die a Christian man."

When the sun had set that evening, poor Jimmy had entered into rest. He was buried somewhere among the woods that night, and no flowers are strewn over his grave on "Decoration Day" as the years go by, for no head board marks his resting-place among the moaning pines; but "the Lord knoweth them that are his."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A BIVOUAC FOR THE NIGHT.

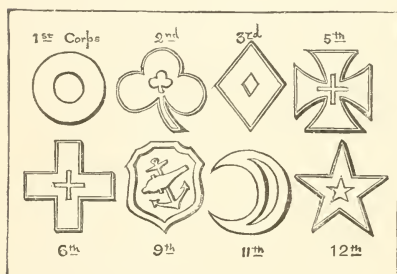
IF from any cause whatsoever one happened to have lost his command, or to have strayed away from or to have been left behind by his regiment, he could usually tell with tolerable certainty, as he trudged along the road among the men of another command, what part of the army he was with, and whether any of his own corps or division were anywhere near by; and he could tell this at a glance, without so much as stopping to ask a question. Do you ask how? I answer by the badges the men wore on their caps.

An admirable and significant system of badges was adopted for the entire Union army. The different corps were distinguished by the *shapes*, the different divisions by the *colors*, of their several badges. Thus the First Corps wore a round badge, the Second a clover leaf, the Third a diamond, the Fifth a Maltese cross, the Sixth a Roman cross, the Ninth a shield, the Eleventh a crescent, the Twentieth a star,¹ and so on. As each corps usually included three divisions, and as it was necessary to distinguish each of these from the other two, the three good old colors of the flag were chosen for this purpose, — red, white, and blue, — red for the First Division of each corps, white for the Second, and blue for the Third. Thus a round red badge meant First Division, First Corps; a round white, Second Division, First Corps; a round blue, Third Division, First Corps; and so on for the other corps. Division and corps headquarters could always be known by their flags, bearing the badges of their respective commands. As the men were all obliged to wear their proper badges, cut out of

¹ Later in the service the Twelfth Corps wore the star.

cloth or colored leather, on the top of their caps, one could always tell at a glance what part of the Army of the Potomac he was with. In addition to this, some regiments were distinguished by some peculiarity of uniform. Our own brigade was everywhere known as "The Bucktails," for we all wore bucktails on the side of our caps.

It was in this way that I was able to tell that none of my own brigade, division, or even corps were anywhere near me, as, late one



ARMY BADGES.

evening, about the middle of May, 1864, I wearily trudged along the road, in the neighborhood of Spottsylvania Court House, in search of my regiment. I had lost the regiment early in the day, for I was so sick and weak when we started in the morning that it was scarcely possible for me to drag one foot after the other,

much less to keep up at the lively pace the men were marching. Thus it had happened that I had been left behind. However, after having trudged along all day as best I could, when nightfall came on I threw myself down under a pine tree along the road which led through the woods, stiff and sore in limb, and half bewildered by a burning fever. All around me the woods were full of men making ready their bivouac for the night. Some were cooking coffee and frying pork, some were pitching their shelters, and some were already stretched out, sound asleep. But all, alas! wore the red Roman cross. Could I only have espied a Maltese cross somewhere, I should have felt at home, for then I should have known that the good old Fifth Corps was near at hand. But no blue Maltese cross (the badge of my own division) was

anywhere to be seen. As I lay there, with half closed eyes, feverishly wondering where in the world I was, and heartily wishing for the sight of some one wearing a bucktail on his cap, I heard a well-known voice talking with some one out in the road, and, leaning upon my elbow, called out eagerly, —

“Harter! Hello! Harter! Harter!”

“Hello! Who are you?” replied the sergeant, peering in amongst the trees and bushes. “Why, Harry, is that you? And where in the world is the regiment?”

“That’s just what I’d like to know,” answered I. “I couldn’t keep up, and was left behind, and have been lost all day. But where have you been? I haven’t seen you this many a day.”

“Well,” said he, as he brought his gun down to a rest, and leaned his two hands on the muzzle, “you see the Johnnies spoiled my good looks a little, back there in the wilderness, and I was sent to the hospital. But I couldn’t stand it there, wounded and dying men all around one; and concluded to shoulder my gun and start out and try to find the boys. Look here,” continued he, taking off a bandage from the side of his face and displaying an ugly-looking bullet hole in his right cheek. “See that hole? It goes clean through, and I can blow through it. But it don’t hurt very much, and will no doubt heal up before the next fight. Anyhow, I have the chunk of lead that made that hole here in my jacket pocket. See that!” said he, taking out a flattened ball from his vest pocket, and rolling it around in the palm of his hand. “Lodged in my mouth, right between my teeth. But I’m tired nearly to death, tramping around all day. Let’s put up for the night. Shall we strike up a tent, or bunk down here under the pines?”

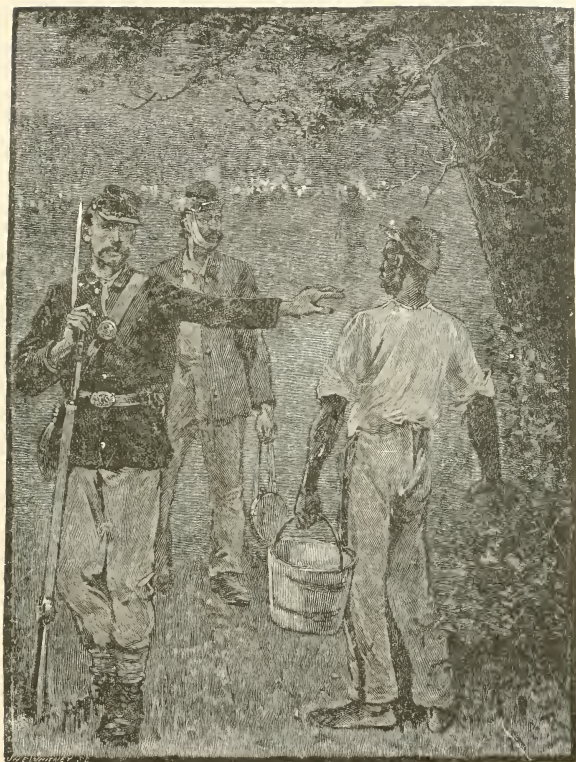
We concluded to put up a shelter, or rather, I should say, Harter did so; for I was too sick and weak to think of anything but sleep and rest, and lay there at full length on a bed of soft pine shatters,

dreamily watching the sergeant's preparations for the night. Throwing off his knapsack, haversack, and accoutrements, he took out his hatchet, trimmed away the lower branches of two pine saplings which stood some six feet apart, cut a straight pole, and laid it across from one to the other of these saplings, buttoned together two shelters and threw them across the ridgepole, staked them down at the corners, and throwing in his traps, exclaimed, —

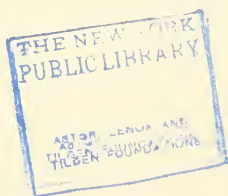
“There you are, ‘as snug as a bug in a rug.’ And now for water, fire, and a supper.”

A fire was soon and easily built, for dry wood was plenty; and soon the flames were crackling, and lighting up the dusky woods. Taking our two canteens, Harter started off in search of water, leaving me to stretch myself out in the tent, and — heartily wish myself at home.

For soldiering is all well enough so long as one is strong and well. But when a man gets sick he is very likely to find that all the romance of marching by day and camping by night is suddenly gone, and that there is, after all, no place like home. For one, I was fully conscious of this as I lay there in the tent, awaiting the sergeant's return. The sounds which came to my ears from the woods, all around me, — of strong men's voices, some shouting and some conversing in low tones; the noise of axes and of falling trees; the busy, bee-like hum, losing itself amongst the trees and in the far distance; the bright glare of the many fires, and the dancing lights and shadows which seemed to people the forest with ghostlike forms, — all this, although at another time it would have had a singular charm, now awakened no response in me. One draught of water at the “Big Spring” at home, which I knew at that very moment was gushing, cool, and clear as crystal, out of the hillside, and on the bottom of which I could in vision see the white pebbles lying, would have been worth to me all, and more than all, the witchery of our bivouac for the night. And I would have given



"GENERAL GRANT CAN'T HAVE ANY OF THIS WATER."



more for a bed on the hard floor on the landing at the head of the stairs at home — I would not have asked for a bed — than for a dozen nights spent in the finest camps in the Army of the Potomac. But the thought of the “Big Spring” troubled me most. It seemed to me that I could see it with my eyes shut, and that I could hear the water as it came gushing out of the hillside and flowed to the meadow, plashing and rippling —

“I tell you, Harry,” said the sergeant, suddenly interrupting my vision as he stepped into the circle of light in front of our little tent, and flung down his canteens, “there isn’t anything like military discipline. I went down the road here about a quarter of a mile, and came out near General Grant’s headquarters, in a clearing. Down at the foot of a hill, right in front of his headquarters, is a spring; but it seems the surgeon of some hospital near by had got there before the general, and had placed a guard on the spring, to keep the water for the wounded. As I came up, I heard the guard say to a ducky, who had come to the spring for water, with a bucket, —

“‘Get out of that, you black rascal; you can’t have any water here.’

“‘Guess I kin,’ said the ducky. ‘I want dis yere water for Gen’l Grant; an’ ain’t he a commandin’ dis yere army, or am you?’

“‘You touch that water, and I’ll run my bayonet through you,’ said the guard. ‘General Grant can’t have any water at this spring till my orders are changed.’

“The ducky, saying that he’d ‘see ’bout dat mighty quick,’ went up the hill to headquarters, and returned in a few moments declaring that, —

“‘Gen’l Grant said dat you got to gib me water outen dis yere spring.’

“‘You go back and tell General Grant, for me,’ said the corporal of the guard, who came up at the moment, ‘that neither he nor any

other general in the Army of the Potomac can get water at this spring till my orders are changed.'

"Now, you see," continued Harter, as he gave me a tin cup on a stick to hold over the fire for coffee, while he cut down a slice of pork, "there's something mighty fine in the idea of a man standing to his post though the heavens fall, and obeying the orders given him when he is put on guard, so that even though the greatest generals in the army send down contrary orders to him, he'll die before he'll give in. A man is mighty strong when he is on guard and obeys orders. Though he's only a corporal, or even a private, he can command the general commanding the army. But I don't believe General Grant sent that dorky for water a second time."

Supper was soon ready, and soon disposed of. Then, without further delay, while the shadows deepened into thick night in the forest, we rolled ourselves up in our blankets and stretched ourselves out with our feet to the fire. Dreamily watching the blazing light of our little camp fire, and thinking each his own thoughts of things which had been and things which might be, we both soon fell sound asleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

“WENT DOWN TO JERICHO AND FELL AMONG THIEVES.”

ON the morning of May 23d, 1864, after a good and refreshing sleep, we took up the line of march and moved rapidly all day in a southerly direction, “straight for Richmond,” according to our somewhat bewildered conception of the geography of those parts. With the exception of an occasional skirmish and some heavy cannonading away along the horizon, we had seen and heard but little of the enemy for several days. Where he was we did not know. We only hoped that, after the terrible fighting of the last two weeks, commencing at the Wilderness on the fifth, he had had enough of it and had taken to his heels and run away, —

“Away down South in Dixie’s land,
Away, away,”

and that we should never again see anything of him but his back. Alas! for the presumption. And alas! for the presumption of the innumerable company and fellowship of cooks, camp-followers, and mule-drivers, who, emboldened by the quietude of the last few days, had ventured to come up from the rear, and had joined each his respective regiment, and were marching along bravely enough, as on the evening of this same May 23d we approached North Anna River, which we were to cross at a place called Jericho Ford. As we came near to the river, we found the supply and ammunition trains “parked” to the rear of a wood a short distance from Jericho, so that as we halted for a while in the edge of the woods nearest to the stream, everything wore so quiet and unsuspecting a look, that no one

dreamed of the enemy being anywhere near at hand. Under the impression that we should probably halt there for the night, I gathered up a number of the boys' canteens and started out in search of water, taking my course toward an open meadow which lay to the right and close to the river's edge. There was a cornfield off to the left, across which I could see the troops leisurely marching in the direction of the bridge. As I stooped down to fill my canteens, another man came up on the same errand as had brought me there. From where I was, I could see the bridge full of troops and the general rabble of camp followers carelessly crossing. But scarcely had I more than half filled my first canteen, when the enemy, lying concealed in the woods on the other side of the river, opened fire.

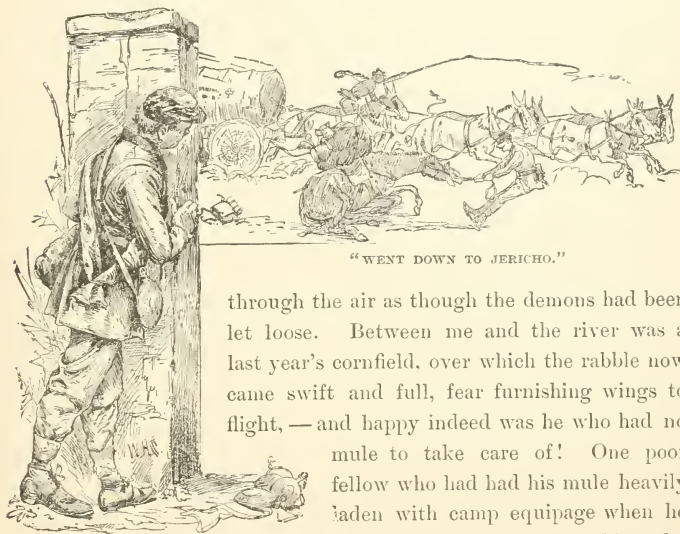
Boom! Bang! Whir-r! Chu-ck!

"Hello!" said I to my companion, "the ball is going to open!"

"Yes," answered he with a drawl and a certain supercilious look, as if to intimate that few besides himself had ever heard a shell crack before — "Yes; but when you have heard as many shells busting about your head as I have" —

Whir-r! Chu-ck! I could hear the terrific shriek of the shell overhead, and the sharp *thud* of the pieces as they tore up the meadow sod to the right and left of us; whereupon my brave and boastful friend, leaving his sentence to be completed and his canteens to be filled some other day, cut for the rear at full speed, ducking his head as he went. Finding an old gateway near by, with high stone posts on either side, I took refuge there; and feeling tolerably safe behind my tall defence, turned about and looked towards the river. It is said that there is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous; and surely laughable indeed was the scene which greeted my eyes. Everything was in confusion, and all was helter-skelter, skurry, and skedaddle. There was the bridge in open view, full of a struggling mass of men, horses, and mules, — the troops trying to force their way over to the

other side, and the yelling crowd of camp followers equally bent on forcing their way back; some jumping or being tumbled off the bridge, while others were swept, *nolens volens*, over to the other side, and there began to plunge into the dirty ooze of the stream, with the evident intention of getting on the safe side of things as speedily as possible, while all the time the shells flew shrieking and screaming



"WENT DOWN TO JERICO."

through the air as though the demons had been let loose. Between me and the river was a last year's cornfield, over which the rabble now came swift and full, fear furnishing wings to flight, — and happy indeed was he who had no mule to take care of! One poor fellow who had had his mule heavily laden with camp equipage when he crossed over, was now making for the rear with his mule at a full trot, but in sad plight himself; for he was hatless, covered with mud, and quite out of breath, had lost saddle, bag, and baggage, and had nothing left but himself, the mule, and the halter. Another, immediately in front of me, had come on well enough until he arrived in the middle of the open field, where the shells were falling rather thick, when his

mule took it into his head that flight was disgraceful, and that he would retreat no farther, — no, not an inch. There he stood like a rock, the poor driver pulling at his halter, and frantically kicking the beast in the ribs, but all to no avail; while all around him, and past him, swept the crowd of his fellow cooks and coffee coolers in full flight for the rear.

As soon as the firing began to cease a little, I started off for the regiment, which had meanwhile changed position. In searching for it I passed the forage and ammunition trains, which were parked to the rear of the woods, and within easy range of the enemy's guns, which latter fact the enemy, fortunately, did not know. One who has not actually seen them, can scarcely form any adequate idea of the vast numbers of white-covered wagons which followed our armies, carrying food, forage, and ammunition; nor can any one who has not actually witnessed a panic among the drivers of these wagons form any conception of the terror into which they were sometimes thrown. The drivers of the ammunition wagons were especially anxious to keep well out of range of shells, — and no wonder! For if a shot from the enemy's guns were to fall amongst a lot of wagons laden with percussion shells, the result may perhaps be imagined. It was no wonder, therefore, that the driver of an ammunition wagon, with six mules in front of him and several tons of death and destruction behind him, felt somewhat nervous when he heard the whirr of the shells over the tops of the pines.

In searching for the regiment, I passed one of these trains. A commissary-sergeant was dealing out forage to his men, who were standing around him in a circle, each holding open a bag for his oats, which the commissary was alternately dealing out to them with a bucket, — a bucketful to this man, then to the next, and so on around the circle. It was plain, however, to any observer, that he was more concerned about the shells than interested in the oats, for he

dodged his head every time a shell cracked, which happened just about the time he was in the act of pouring a bucketful of oats into a bag.

While I was looking at them, Page, a Michigan boy, who was well known to me, came up on his horse in search of our division forage train, for he was orderly to our brigadier-general, and wanted oats for his horses. Stopping a moment to contemplate the scene I was admiring, he said, —

"You just keep an eye on my horse a minute, will you, and I'll show you how I get oats for my horses when forage is scarce."

It was very often a difficult matter for the mounted officers to get forage for their horses; for our movements were so many and so sudden, that it was plainly impossible for the trains to follow us wherever we went. Often, when we halted at night, the wagons were miles and miles away from us, and sometimes we did not get a sight of them for a week, or even longer. Then the poor hard-ridden horses would have to suffer. But it was well known that Page could get oats when nobody else could. Though the wagon trains were many miles in the rear, Page seldom permitted his horses to go to bed supperless. Though an American by birth, he was a Spartan in craft, and had a wit as keen and sharp as a razor. It was said, that rather than have his horses go without their allowance he would, if necessary, sit up half the night, after a hard day's march, and wait till everybody else was sound asleep, and then quietly slip from under the heads of the orderlies of other commands the very oat bags which, in order to guard them the more securely, they were using for their pillows; for oats Page would have for the general's horse, by hook or by crook.

"You see the commissary, yonder?" said Page to me, in a half whisper, as he dismounted, and threw an empty bag over his arm and gave his waist belt a hitch: "he's a coward, he is. Look at him, how

he jukes his head at every crack of the cannon ! Don't know whether he's dealing out oats to the right man or not. Just you keep an eye on my horse, will you ? ”

Now Page had no right in the least to draw forage rations there, for that was not our division train. But as he did not know where our division train was, and as all the oats belonged to Uncle Sam anyhow, why, where was the harm of getting your forage wherever you could ?

Pushing his way into the circle of teamsters, who were too much engaged in watching for shells to notice the presence of a stranger, Page boldly opened his bag, while Mr. Commissary, ducking his head between his shoulders at every boom of the guns, poured four bucketfuls of oats into the bag of the new comer ; whereupon Page shouldered his prize, mounted his horse, and rode away with a smile on his face, which said, as plainly as could be, “ That's the way to do it, my lad ! ”

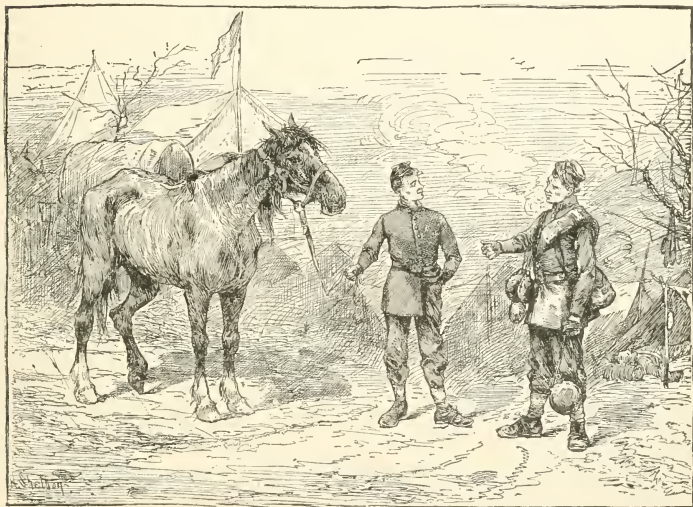
In the wild mêlée of that May evening, there at Jericho, — where, evidently, we had all fallen among thieves, — there was no little confusion as to the rights of property ; *meum* and *tuum* got sadly mixed ; some horses had lost their owners, and some owners had lost their horses ; and the same was the case with the mules. So that by the time things began to get quiet again, some of the boys had picked up stray horses, or bought them for a mere song. On coming up with the regiment, I found that Andy had just concluded a bargain of this sort. He had bought a sorrel horse. The animal was a great, raw-boned, ungainly beast, built after the Gothic style of horse architecture, and would have made an admirable sign for a feed store up North, as a substitute for “ Oats wanted ; inquire within.” However, when I came up Andy had already concluded the bargain, and had become the sole owner and proprietor of the sorrel horse, for the small consideration of ten dollars.

"Why, Andy!" exclaimed I, "what in the name of all conscience do you want with a horse? Going to join the cavalry?"

"Well," said Andy, with a grin, "I took him on a speculation. Going to feed him up a little —"

"Glad to hear it," said I; "he needs it sadly."

"Yes; going to feed him up and then sell him to somebody, and



"ANDY HAD BOUGHT THE SORREL FOR TEN DOLLARS."

double my money on him, you see. You may ride him on the march and carry our traps. I guess the colonel will give you permission. And, you know, that would be a capital arrangement for you, for you are so sick and weak that you are often left behind on the march."

"Thank you, old boy," said I with a shrug. "You always were a good, kind, thoughtful soul; but if the choice must be between joining

the general cavalcade of coffee-coolers on this old barebones of yours and marching afoot, I believe I'd prefer the infantry."

However, we tied a rope around the neck of *Bonaparte*, as we significantly called him, fastened him up to a stake, rubbed him down, begged some oats of Page, and pulled some handfuls of young grass for him, and so left him for the night.

I do not think Andy slept well that night. How could he after so bold a dash into the horse market? Grotesque images of the wooden horse of ancient Troy, and of Don Quixote on his celebrated Rosinante, charging the windmills, were no doubt hopelessly mixed up in his dreams with wild vagaries of General Grant at the head of Mosby's men, fiercely trying to force a passage across Jericho Ford. For daylight had scarcely begun to peep into the forest the next morning, when Andy rolled out from under the blankets and went to look after *Bonaparte*. I was building a fire when he came back. It seemed to me that he looked a little solemn.

"How's Bony this morning, Andy?" inquired I.

Andy whistled a bit, stuck his hands into his pockets, mounted a log, took off his cap, made a bow, and said, —

"Comrades and fellow-citizens, lend me your ears, and be silent that you may hear! This is my first and last speculation in horse-flesh. *Bony is gone*.

It was indeed true. We had fallen among thieves, and they had even baffled Andy's plan for future money making; for none of us ever laid eyes on Bony again.

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE FRONT AT PETERSBURG.

“ANDY, let’s go a-swimming.”

“Well, Harry, I don’t know about that. I’d like to take a good plunge ; but, you see, there’s no telling how soon we may move.”

It was the afternoon of Tuesday, June 14, 1864. We had been marching and fighting almost continually for five weeks and more, from the Wilderness to Spottsylvania, over the North Anna, in at Cold Harbor, across the Pamunky and over the Chickahominy to the banks of the James River, about a mile and a half from which we were now lying, along a dusty road. We were sunburned, covered with dust, and generally used up, so that a swim in the river would be a refreshment indeed.

Having learned from one of the officers that the intention evidently was to remain where we then were until the entire corps should come up, and that we should probably cross the river at or somewhere near that point, we resolved to risk it.

So, over a cornfield we started at a good pace. We had not gone far, when we discovered a mule tied up in a clump of bushes, with a rope around his neck. And this long-eared animal, as Gothic as Bonaparte in his style of architecture, we decided, after a solemn council of war, to declare contraband, and forthwith we impressed him into service, intending to return him, after our bath, on our way back to camp. Untying Bucephalus from the bush, we mounted, Andy in front and I on behind, each armed with a switch, and we rode along gayly enough, with our feet dangling among the corn stalks.

For a while all went well. We fell to talking about the direction

we had come since leaving the Pamunky; and Andy, who was usually such an authority on matters geographical and astronomical that on the march he was known in the company as "the compass," confessed to me as we rode on that he himself had been somewhat turned about in that march over the Chickahominy swamp.

"And as for me," said I, "I think this is the awfulest country to get turned about in that I ever did see. Why, Andy, while we were lying over there in the road it seemed to me that the sun was going down in the east. Fact! But when I took my canteen and went over a little ridge to the rear to look for water for coffee, I found, on looking up, that on that side of the ridge the sun was all right. Yet when I got back to the road and looked around, judge of my surprise when I found the whole thing had somehow swung around again, and the sun was going down in the east! And you may judge still further of my surprise, Andy, when, on going and walking back and forth across that ridge, I found one particular spot from which, if I looked in one direction, the sun was going down all right in the west; but if in the opposite direction, he was going down all wrong, entirely wrong, in the east!"

"Whoa dar! Whoa dar! Whar you gwine wid dat dar mule o' mine? Whoa, Pete!"

The mule stopped stock still as we caught sight of the black head and face of a darky boy peering forth from the door of a tobacco house that we were passing. Possibly, he was the owner of the whole plantation now, and the mule Pete might be his only live stock.

"Where are we going, Pompey? Why, we're going 'on to Richmond!'"

"On ter Richmon'! An' wid dat dar mule o' mine! 'Clar to goodness, sodgers can't git along widout dat mule. Better git off'n dat dar mule!"

"Whip him up, Andy!" shouted I.

"Come up, Bucephalus!" shouted Andy.

And we both laid on right lustily. But never an inch would that miserable mule budge from the position he had taken on hearing the darky's voice, until all of a sudden, and as if a mine had been sprung



"BETTER GIT OFF'N DAT DAR MULE!"

under our feet, there was such a striking out of heels and such an uncomfortable elevation in the rear, the angle of which was only increased by increased cudgelling, that, at last, with an enormous spring, Andy and I were sent flying off into the corn.

“Yi! yi! yi! Didn’ I say better git off’n dat dar mule o’ mine? Yi! yi! yi!”

Laughing as heartily as the ducky at our misadventure, we felt that it would be safer to make for the river afoot. We had a glorious plunge in the waters of the James, and returned to the regiment at sunset, greatly refreshed.

The next day we crossed the James in steamboats. There were thousands of men in blue all along both shores; some were crossing, some were already over, and others were awaiting their turn. By the middle of the forenoon we were all well over, and it has been said that had we pushed on without delay, the story of the siege of Petersburg would have read quite differently. But we waited, — for provisions, I believe, — and during this halt the whole corps took a grand swim in the river. We marched off at three o’clock in the afternoon, over a dusty road and without fresh water, and reached the neighborhood of Petersburg at midnight; but did not get into position until after several days of hard fighting in the woods.

It would be impossible to give a clear and interesting account of the numerous engagements in which we took part around that long beleaguered city, where for ten months the two great armies of the North and South sat down to watch and fight each other until the end came. For, after days and days of manœuvring and fighting, attack and sally, it became evident that Petersburg could not be carried by storm, and there was nothing for it but to sit down stubbornly, and, by cutting off all railroad supplies and communications, starve it into surrender.

It may be interesting, however, to tell something of the everyday life and experience of our soldiers during that great siege.

Digging becomes almost an instinct with the experienced soldier. It is surprising how rapidly men in the field throw up fortifications, how the work progresses, and what immense results can be accom-



FINDING A WOUNDED PICKET IN A RIFLE-PIT.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATION

plished by a body of troops in a single night. Let two armies fight in the open field one evening. By the next morning both are strongly intrenched behind rifle-pits and breastworks, which it will cost either side much blood to storm and take. If spades and picks are at hand when there is need of fortifications, well; if not, bayonets, tin cups, plates, even jackknives, are pressed into service until better tools arrive; and every man works like a beaver.

Thus it was that although throughout the eighteenth of June the fighting had been severe, yet, in spite of weariness and darkness, we set to work, and the morning found us behind breastworks; these we soon so enlarged and improved that they became well-nigh impregnable. At that part of the line where our regiment was stationed, we built solid works, of great pine logs, rolled up, log on log, seven feet high, and banked with earth on the side toward the enemy, the whole being ten feet through at the base. On the inside of these breastworks we could walk about, perfectly safe from the enemy's bullets, which usually went singing harmlessly over our heads.

On the outside of these works were further defences. First, there was the ditch made by throwing up the ground against the logs; then, farther out, about twenty or thirty yards away, was the *abatis*—a peculiar means of defence, made by cutting off the tops and heavy limbs of trees, sharpening the ends, and planting them firmly in the ground, in a long row, the sharpened ends pointing toward the enemy, the whole being so close, and so compacted together with telegraph wires, everywhere twisted in, that it was impossible for a line of battle to get through it without being cut off to a man. Here and there, at intervals, were left gaps wide enough to admit a single man, and it was through these man-holes that the pickets passed out to their pits beyond.

Fifty yards in front of the *abatis* the pickets were stationed. When first the siege began, picketing was dangerous business. Both

armies were bent on fight, and picketing meant simply sharpshooting. As a consequence, at first the pickets were posted only at night, so that from midnight to midnight the poor fellows lay in their rifle-pits, under a broiling July sun, with no protection from the intolerable heat excepting the scanty shade of a little pine brush, erected overhead, or in front of the pit as a screen. There the picket lay, flat on his face, picking off the enemy's men whenever he could catch sight of a head, or even so much as a hand; and right glad would he be if, when the long-awaited relief came at length, he had no wounds to show.

But later on, as the siege progressed, this murderous state of affairs gradually disappeared. Neither side found it pleasant or profitable, and nothing was gained by it. It decided nothing, and only wasted powder and ball. And so, gradually the pickets on both sides began to be on quite friendly terms. It was no unusual thing to see a Johnny picket—who would be posted scarcely a hundred yards away, so near were the lines—lay down his gun, wave a piece of white paper, as a signal of truce, walk out into the neutral ground between the picket lines, and meet one of our own pickets, who, also dropping his gun, would go out to inquire what Johnny might want to-day.

“Well, Yank, I want some coffee, and I'll trade tobacco for it.”

“Has any of you fellows back there some coffee to trade for tobacco? ‘Johnny Picket,’ here, wants some coffee.”

Or, maybe he wanted to trade papers, a Richmond *Enquirer* for a New York *Herald* or *Tribune*, “even up, and no odds.” Or he only wanted to talk about the news of the day—how “we ’uns whipped you ’uns up the valley the other day”; or how “if we had Stonewall Jackson yet, we'd be in Washington before winter”; or maybe he only wished to have a friendly game of cards!

There was a certain chivalrous etiquette developed through this social intercourse of deadly foemen, and it was really admirable.



SCENE AMONG THE RIFLE-PITS BEFORE PETERSBURG.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

Seldom was there breach of confidence on either side. It would have gone hard with the comrade who should have ventured to shoot down a man in gray who had left his gun and come out of his pit under the sacred protection of a piece of white paper. If disagreement ever occurred in bartering, or high words arose in discussion, shots were never fired until due notice had been given. And I find mentioned in one of my old army letters that a general fire along our entire front grew out of some disagreement on the picket line about trading coffee for tobacco. The two pickets couldn't agree, jumped into their pits, and began firing, the one calling out: "Look out, Yank, here comes your tobacco." Bang!

And the other replying, — "All right, Johnny, here comes your coffee." Bang!

Great forts stood at intervals all along the line as far as the eye could see, and at these the men toiled day and night all summer long, adding defence to defence, and making "assurance doubly sure," until the forts stood out to the eye of the beholder, with their sharp angles and well-defined outlines, formidable structures indeed. Without attempting to describe them in technical military language, I will simply ask you to imagine a piece of level ground, say two hundred feet square, surrounded by a bank of earth about twenty feet in height, with rows of gabions¹ and sand bags arranged on top of the embankment, and at intervals along the sides, embrasures or port-holes, at which the great cannon were planted, — and you will have some rough notion of what one of our forts looked like. Somewhere within the inclosure, usually near the centre of it, was the magazine, where the powder and shells were stored. This was made by digging a deep place something like a cellar, covering it over with heavy logs, and piling up earth and sand bags on the logs, the whole, when finished, having the shape of a small round-topped pyramid. At the rear was

¹ Bottomless wicker baskets, used to strengthen earth-works.

left a small passage, like a cellar-way, and through this the ammunition was brought up. If ever the enemy could succeed in dropping a shell down that little cellar door, or in otherwise piercing the magazine, then good by to the fort and all and everybody in and around it!

On the outside of each large fort there were, of course, all the usual defences of ditch, *abatis*, and *chevaux-de-frise*, to render approach very dangerous to the enemy.

The enemy had fortifications like ours, — long lines of breastworks, with great forts at commanding positions ; and the two lines were so near that, standing in one of our forts, I could have carried on a conversation with a man in the fort opposite. I remember, while on the picket-line one evening, watching a body of troops moving along the edge of a wood within the enemy's works, and quite easily distinguishing the color of their uniforms.

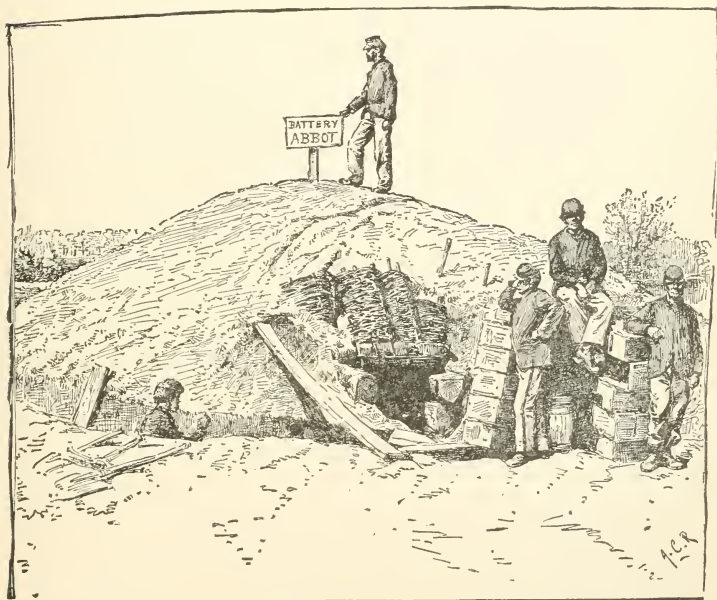
I have said already that, inside of our breastworks, one was quite secure against the enemy's bullets. But bullets were not the only things we had to look out for, — there were the shell, the case-shot, and I know not what shot besides. Every few hours these would be dropped behind our breastworks, and often much execution was done by them. To guard against these missiles, each mess built what was called a "bomb-proof," which consisted of an excavation about six feet square by six deep, covered with heavy logs, the logs covered with earth, a little back cellar-way being left on the side away from the enemy. Into this bomb-proof we could dart the moment the shelling began, and be as safe as in our own mother's kitchen. Our shelter-tents we pitched on top of the bomb-proof, and in this upper story we lived most of the time, dropping down occasionally into the cellar.

Bang ! bang ! bang !

"Fall into your pits, boys !" and in a trice there wasn't so much as a blue coat in sight.

Familiarity breeds contempt, — even of danger ; and sometimes we

were caught. Thus, one day, when there had been no shelling for a long time, and we had grown somewhat careless, and were scattered about under the trees, some sleeping and others sitting on top of the breastworks to get a mouthful of fresh air, all of a sudden the guns of



THE MAGAZINE WHERE THE POWDER AND SHELLS WERE STORED.

one of the great forts opposite us opened with a rapid fire, dropping shells right among us. Of course there was a "scatteration" as we tried to fall into our pits pell-mell; but, for all our haste, several of us were severely hurt. There was a boy from Philadelphia, — I forget his name, — sitting on the breastworks writing a letter home; a piece

of shell tore off his arm with the pen in his hand. A lieutenant received an iron slug in his back, while a number of other men were hurt. And such experiences were of frequent occurrence.

A great victory had been gained by our cavalry somewhere, I think by Sheridan, and one evening an orderly rode along the line to each regimental headquarters, distributing despatches containing an account of the victory, with instructions that the papers be read to the men. Cheers were given all along the line that night, and a shotted salute was ordered at daylight the next morning.

At sunrise every available gun from the Appomattox to the Weldon Railroad must have been brought into service and trained against the enemy's works, for the noise was terrific. And still further to increase the din, the Johnnies, supposing it to be a grand assault along the whole line, replied with every gun they could bring to bear, and the noise was so great that you would have thought the very thunders of doom were rolling. After the firing had ceased, the Johnnies were informed that "we have only been giving three iron cheers for the victory Sheridan has gained up the valley lately." There was, I presume, some regret on the other side over the loss of powder and shot. At all events, whenever, after that, similar iron cheers were given, and this was not seldom the case, the enemy preserved a moody silence.

After remaining in our works for about a month, we were relieved by other troops and marched off to the left in the direction of the Weldon Railroad, which we took after severe fighting. We held it, and at once fortified our position with a new line of works, thus cutting off one of the main lines of communication between Petersburg and the South.

CHAPTER XXI.

FUN AND FROLIC.

IN what way to account for it I know not, but so it is, that soldiers always have been, and I suppose always will be, merry-hearted fellows and full of good spirits. One would naturally suppose that, having so much to do with hardship and danger every day, they would be sober and serious above the generality of men. But such was by no means the case with our Boys in Blue. In camp, on the march, nay even in the solemn hour of battle, there was ever and anon a laugh passing down the line or some sport going on amongst the tents. Seldom was there wanting some one noted for his powers of story telling, to beguile the weary hours about the camp fire at the lower end of the company street, or out among the pines on picket. Few companies could be found without some native-born wag or wit, whose conical songs or quaint remarks kept the boys in good humor, while at the same time each and all, according to the measure of their several capacities, were given to playing practical jokes of one kind or other for the general enlivenment of the camp.

There was Corporal Harter, for example, of my own company. I do not single him out as a remarkable wit, or in any sense as a shining light in our little galaxy of "Boys in Blue"; but choose him rather as an average specimen. More than one was the trick which Harter played on Andy and myself — though I cannot help but remember, also, that he sometimes had good ground for so doing, as the following will show.

It was while we were yet lying around Washington, during the

winter of 1863, that Harter and I one day secured a "pass," and went into the city. In passing the Treasury Department we found a twenty-five cent note. We had, at first, a mind to call on the Secretary of the Treasury and ask whether he had lost it, as we had found it in front of his establishment; but thinking that it would not go very far toward paying the expenses of the war, and reflecting that even if it did belong to Uncle Sam, we belonged to Uncle Sam too, and so where could be the harm of our keeping it, and laying it out on ourselves? We finally concluded to spend it at a certain print shop on Pennsylvania Avenue, where were exposed for sale great numbers of colored pictures, of different generals and statesmen, a prize of cheap gilt jewelry being given with each picture. For the jewelry we cared not a whit; but the pictures each of us was anxious to possess, for they would make very nice decorations for our tents, we thought. Having, then, purchased a number of these with our treasure trove, and having received from the shopkeeper a handful of brass earrings, which neither of us wanted (for what in the world did a soldier want with brass earrings, or even with gold ones, for the matter of that?), we took our way to the park, west of the Capitol buildings, and sat down on a bench.

"Now, Harry," said the corporal, as he sat wistfully looking at a picture of a general dressed in the bluest of blue uniforms, who, with sword drawn and horse at full gallop, dismounted cannon in the rear, and clouds of blue smoke in front, was apparently leading his men on to the desperate charge. The men had not come on the field yet, but it was of course understood, by the general's looks, that they were coming somewhere in the background. A person can't have *everything* in a picture, at the rate of four for a quarter, with a handful of earrings thrown in to clinch the bargain, all of which, no doubt, passed rapidly through the corporal's mind as he examined the pictures. "Now, Harry, how will we divide 'em?"

"Well, corporal," answered I, "suppose we do it in this way: we'll toss up a penny for it. 'Heads I win, tails you lose,' you know. If it comes head, I'll take the pictures and you'll take the jewelry; if it comes tail, you'll take the jewelry and I'll take the pictures. That's fair and square, isn't it?"

The corporal's head could not have been very clear that morning, or he would have seen through this nicely laid little scheme as clearly as one can see through a grindstone with a hole in the middle. But the proposition was so rapidly announced, and set forth with such an appearance of candor and exact justice, that, not seeing the trap laid for him, he promptly got out a penny from his pocket, and, balancing it on his thumb-nail, while he thoughtfully squinted up toward a tree-top near by, said, —

"I guess that's fair. Here goes — but, hold on! How is it, now? Say it over again."

"Why, it's as plain as the nose on your face, man. Don't you see? If it comes head, then I take the pictures and you take the jewelry. If it comes tail, then you take the jewelry and I take the pictures. Nothing could be plainer than that; so, flop her up, corporal."

"All right, Harry. Here she go —. But hold on!" said he, as a new light seemed to dawn on his mind, while he raised his cap, and thoughtfully scratched his head. "Let me see. Ah, you young rascal! You're sharp, you are! Going to gobble up the whole grist of illuminated generals and statesmen, and leave me this handful of brass earrings and breastpins to send home to the girl I left behind me — eh?"

But every dog has his day, and whether or not Harter bided his time for retaliation, or had quite forgotten about "heads I win, tails you lose," by the time we got down into Virginia, yet so it was that in more than one camp he gave Andy and myself a world of trouble. More than one evening in winter quarters, as we sat about our fire,

cartridges were dropped down our chimney by some unseen hand, driving us out of our tent in a jiffy; and it was not seldom that our pan of frying hard-tack was sent a flying by a sudden explosion. It was wasted breath to ask who did it.

We were lying in camp near the Rappahannock some time along in the fall of 1863, when Andy said one day, —

“Look here, Harry, let’s have some *roast* beef once. I’m tired of this everlasting frying and frizzling, and my mouth just waters for a good roast. And I’ve just learned how to do it, too; for I saw a fellow over here in another camp at it, and I tell you it’s just fine. You see, you take your chunk of beef and wrap it up in a cloth or newspaper, and then you get some clay and cover it thick all over with the clay, until it looks like a big forty pound cannon-ball, and then you put it in among the red hot coals, and it bakes hard like a brick; and when it’s done you just crack the shell off, and out comes your roast, fit for the table of a king.”

We at once set to work, and all went well enough till Harter came along that way. While Andy was off for more clay, and I was looking after more paper, Harter fumbled around our beef, saying he didn’t believe we could roast it that way.

“Just you wait, now,” said Andy, coming in with the clay; “we’ll show you.”

So we covered our beef thick with stiff clay, and rolled the great ball into the camp fire, burying it among the hot ashes and coals, and sat down to watch it, while the rest of the boys were boiling their coffee and frying their steaks for dinner. The fire was a good one, and there were about a dozen black tin cups dangling on as many long sticks, their several owners squatting about in a circle, when, all of a sudden, with a terrific bang, amid a shower of sparks and hot ashes, the coffee boilers were scattered right and left, and a dozen quarts of coffee sent hissing and sizzling into the fire. Our poor roast beef was

a sorry-looking mess indeed when we picked it out of the general wreck.

We always believed that Harter had somehow smuggled a cartridge into that beef of ours, while our backs were turned, and we determined to pay him back in his own coin on the very first favorable opportunity. It was a long time, however, before the coveted opportunity came ; in fact, it was quite a year afterward, and happened in this wise.

We were lying in front of Petersburg, some little while after the celebrated Petersburg mine explosion, of which my readers have no doubt often heard. We were playing a game of chess one day, Andy and I, behind the high breastworks. Our chessmen we had whittled out of soft white pine with our jack knives. I remember we were at first puzzled to know how to distinguish our men ; for, all being whittled out of white pine, both sides were of course alike white, and it was impossible to keep them from getting sadly confused during the progress of the game. At length, however, we hit on the expedient of staining one half of our men with tincture of iodine, which we begged of the surgeon, and then they did quite well. Our kings we called generals, — one Grant, the other Lee ; the knights were cavalry ; the castles, forts ; the bishops, chaplains ; and the pawns, Yanks and Johnny Rebs. We were deep in a game of chess with these our men one day, when Andy suddenly broke a long silence by saying, —

“ Harry, do you remember how Harter blew up our beef-roast last year, down there along the Rappahannock ? And don’t you think it’s pretty nearly time we should pay him back ? Because if you do, I’ve got a plan for doing it.”

“ Yes, Andy, I remember it quite well ; but then, you know, we are not quite sure he did it. Besides, he was corporal then, and he’s captain now, and he might play the mischief with us if he catches us at any nice little game of that sort.”

“Oh, pshaw!” exclaimed Andy, as he threw out his cavalry on my right flank. “He won’t find out; and if he does, ‘all’s fair in love, war, and controversy,’ you know, and I’m sure we can rely on his good nature, even if he does get a little riled.”

On examining into matters at the conclusion of the game, we found that the captain was on duty somewhere, and that, so far, the coast was clear. Entering his tent, we found a narrow bunk of poles on either side, with an open space of several feet between the two. Here, while Andy set out in search of ammunition, I was set to digging a six-inch square hole in the ground, into which we emptied the powder of a dozen cartridges, covering all carefully with earth, and laying a long train, or running fuse, out of the rear of the tent.

When Harter came in for dinner, and was comfortably seated on his bunk with his cup of bean soup on his knee, suddenly there was a fiz-z-z and a boom! and Harter came dashing out of his tent, covered with gravel and bespattered with bean soup, to the great merriment of the men, who instantly set up shouts of, —

“Fall in your pits!”

“Petersburg mine explosion!”

“’Nother great Union victory!”

Did he get cross? Well, it was natural he should feel a little vexed when the fur was so rudely brushed the wrong way; but he tried not to show it, and laughed along with the rest; for in war, as in peace, a man must learn to join in a laugh at his own expense sometimes, as well as to make merry over the mishaps of others.

A famous and favorite kind of sport, especially when we had been long lying in camp in summer, or were in quarters in winter, was what was commonly known as “raiding the sutler.”

We heard a great deal in those days about “raids.” We read in the newspapers which occasionally fell into our hands, or heard on the

picket-line, of raids into Maryland and raids into Pennsylvania, sometimes by Mosby's men, and sometimes by Stuart's cavalry; and it was quite natural, when growing weary of the dull monotony of camp life, to look around for some one to raid. Very often the sutler was the chosen victim. He was selected, not because he was a civilian and wore citizen's clothes, but chiefly because of what seemed to the boys the questionable character of his pursuit, — making money out of the soldiers. "Here we are," — for so the men would reason — "here we are, — left home and took our lives in our hands — in for 'three years or sooner shot' — get thirteen dollars a month and live on hard-tack; and over there is that sutler, at whose shop a man may spend a whole month's pay and hardly get enough to make a single good meal — it's a confounded mean business!"

The sutler seldom enjoyed much respect, as how could he when he flourished and fattened on our hungry stomachs? Of course, if a man spent the whole of his month's pay for ginger-cakes and sardines, why it was his own fault. He did not need to spend his money if he did not choose to do so. But it was hardly in human nature to live on pork, bean-soup and hard-tack day after day, and not feel the mouth water at the sight of the sutler's counter, with its array of delicacies, poor and common though they were. Besides, the sutler usually charged most exorbitant prices — two ginger-cakes for five cents, four apples for a quarter, eighty cents for a small can of condensed milk, and ninety for a pound of butter, which Andy usually denounced in vigorous Biblical terms as being as strong as Samson and as old as Methuselah. Maybe the sutler's charges were none too high, when his many risks were duly considered; for he was usually obliged to transport his goods a great distance, over almost impassable roads, and was often liable to capture by the enemy's foraging parties, besides being exposed to numerous other fortunes of war, whereby he might lose his all in an hour. But soldiers in search of sport were not much dis-

posed to take a just and fair view of all his circumstances. What they saw was only this—that they wanted somebody to raid, and who could be a fitter subject than the sutler?

The sutler's establishment was a large wall tent, usually pitched on the side of the camp farthest away from the colonel's quarters. It was therefore in a somewhat exposed and tempting position. Whenever it was thought well to raid him, the men of his own regiment would usually enter into a contract with those of some neighboring regiment,—

“You fellows come over here some night and raid our sutler, and then we'll come over to your camp some night and raid your sutler. Will you do it?”

It was generally agreed to, this courteous offer of friendly offices; and great, though indescribable, was the sport which often resulted. For when all had been duly arranged and made ready, some dark night, when the sutler was sleeping soundly in his tent, a skirmish line from the neighboring regiment would cautiously pick its way down the hill, and through the brush, and silently surround the tent. One party, creeping close in by the wall of the tent, would loosen the ropes and remove them from the stakes on the one side, while another party, on the other side, at a given signal, would pull the whole concern down over the sutler's head. And then would arise yells and cheers for a few moments, followed by immediate silence as the raiding party would steal quietly away.

Did they steal his goods? Very seldom; for soldiers are not thieves, and plunder was not the object, but only fun. Why did not the officers punish the men for doing this? Well, sometimes they did. But sometimes the officers believed the sutler to be exorbitant in his charges and oppressive to the men, and cared little how soon he was cleared out and sent a packing; and therefore they enjoyed the sport quite as well as the men, and often did as Nelson did when he put his

blind eye to the telescope and declared he did not see the signal to recall the fleet. They winked at the frolic, and came on the scene, usually, in ample time to condole with the sutler, but quite too late to do him any service.

Thus, once when the sutler was being raided he hastily sent for the "officer of the day," whose business it was to keep order in the camp. But he was so long in coming, that the boys were in the height of their sport when he arrived; and not wishing to spoil their fun, he gave his orders in two quite different ways, — one in a very loud voice, intended for the sutler to hear, and the other in a whisper, designed for the boys, —

(*Loud.*) "Get out of this! Put you all in the guardhouse!"

(*Whisper.*) "Pitch in, boys! Pitch in, boys!"

The sutler's tent was often a favorite lounging place with the officers. One evening early, a party of about a dozen officers were seated on boxes and barrels in the sutler's establishment. All of them wanted cigars, but no one liked to call for them, for cigars were so dear that no one cared about footing the bill for the whole party, and yet could not be so impolite as to call for one for himself alone. As they sat there, with the flaps of the tent thrown back, they could see quite across the camp to the colonel's quarters beyond.

"Now, boys," said Captain K——, "I see the chaplain coming down Company C street, and I think he is coming here; and if he does come here we'll have some fun at his expense. We all want cigars, and we might as well confess, what is an open secret, that not one of us dares to call for a cigar for himself alone, nor feels like footing the bill for the whole party. Well, let the sutler set out a few boxes of cigars on the counter, so as to have them handy when they are needed, and you follow my lead, and we'll see whether we can't, somehow or other, make the chaplain yonder pay the reckoning."

The chaplain in question, be it remembered, made some pretension

to literature, and considered himself quite an authority in camp on all questions pertaining to orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody; and presumed to be an umpire in all matters which might from time to time come into discussion in the realm of letters. So, when he came into the sutler's tent, Captain K—— saluted him with, —

“Good evening, chaplain; you're just the very man we want to see. We've been having a little discussion here, and as we saw you coming we thought we'd submit the question to you for decision.”

“Well, gentlemen,” said the chaplain, with a smile of gratification, “I shall be only too happy to render you what poor assistance I can. May I inquire what may be the question under discussion?”

“It is but a small thing,” replied the captain; “you might, I suppose, call it more a *matter of taste* than anything else. It concerns a question of emphasis, or rather, perhaps, of inflection, and it is this: Would you say, ‘Gentlemen, will you have a cigár?’ or ‘Gentlemen, will you have a cigàr?’”

Pushing his hat forward, as he thoughtfully scratched his head, the chaplain, after a pause, responded. —

“Well, there don't seem to be much difference between the two. But, on consideration, I believe I would say, ‘Gentlemen, will you have a cigár?’”

“*Certainly!*” exclaimed they all, in full and hearty chorus, as they rushed up to the counter in a body, and each took a handful of cigars, with a “Thank you, chaplain,” leaving their bewildered literary umpire to pay the bill, — which, for the credit of his cloth, I believe he did.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHIEFLY CULINARY.

IT was Frederick the Great, I believe, who said that "An army, like a serpent, goes upon its belly;" which was but another way of saying, that if you want men to fight well, you must feed them well.

Of provisions, Uncle Sam usually gave us a sufficiency; but the table to which he invited his boys was furnished with little variety and less delicacy. On first entering the service, the drawing of our rations was not a small undertaking, for there were nearly a hundred of us in the company, and it takes a considerable weight of bread and pork to feed a hundred hungry stomachs. But after we had been in the field a year or two, the call, "Fall in for your hard-tack!" was leisurely responded to by only about a dozen men,—lean, sinewy, hungry-looking fellows, each with his haversack in hand. I can see them yet, as they sat squatting around a gum blanket, spread on the ground, on which were a small heap of sugar, another of coffee, and another of rice, may be, which the corporal was dealing out by successive spoonfuls, as the boys held open their little black bags to receive their portion, while near by lay a small piece of salt pork or beef, or possibly a dozen potatoes.

Much depended, of course, on the cooking of the provisions furnished us. At first we tried a company cook; but we soon learned that the saying of Miles Standish, —

"If you wish a thing to be well done,
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!"

applied to cooking quite as well as to courting. We therefore soon dispensed with our cook, and although scarcely any of us knew how to cook so much as a cup of coffee when we took the field, a keen appetite, aided by that necessity which is ever the mother of invention, soon taught us how bean soup should be made and hard-tack prepared.

Hard-tack! It is a question which I have much debated with myself while writing, whether this chapter should not be entitled "Hard-tack." For as this article of diet was the grand staff of life to the Boys in Blue, it would seem that but little could be said of the culinary art in camp without involving some mention of hard-tack at almost every turn.

As I write, there lies before me on my table an innocent-looking cracker, which I have faithfully preserved for years. It is about the size and has the general appearance of an ordinary soda biscuit. If you take it in your hand, you will find it somewhat heavier than an ordinary biscuit, and if you bite it — but no; I will not let you bite it, for I wish to see how long I can keep it. But if you were to reduce it to a fine powder, you would find that it would absorb considerably more water than an equal weight of wheat flour; showing that in the making of hard-tack the chief object in view is to stow away the greatest amount of nourishment in the smallest amount of space. You will also observe that this cracker is very hard. This you may perhaps attribute to its great age. But if you imagine that its age is to be measured only by the years which have elapsed since the war, you are greatly mistaken; for there was a common belief among the boys that our hard-tack had been baked long before the commencement of the Christian era! This opinion was based upon the fact that the letters B. C. were stamped on many, if not indeed all, of the cracker-boxes. To be sure there were some wiseacres who shook their heads, and maintained that these mysterious letters were the initials of the name of some army contractor or inspector of supplies; but the

belief was widespread and deep-seated that they were without a doubt intended to set forth the era in which our bread had been baked.

For our hard-tack were very hard ; you could scarcely break them with your teeth — some of them you could not fracture with your fist. Still, as I have said, there was an immense amount of nourishment



“FALL IN FOR HARD TACK!”

stowed away in them, as we soon discovered when once we had learned the secret of getting at it. It required some experience and no little hunger to enable one to appreciate hard-tack aright, and it demanded no small amount of inventive power to understand how to cook hard-tack as they ought to be cooked. If I remember correctly, in our section of the army we had not less than fifteen different ways of preparing them. In other parts, I understand, they had discovered

one or two ways more; but with us, fifteen was the limit of the culinary art when this article of diet was on the board.

On the march they were usually not cooked at all, but eaten in the raw state. In order, however, to make them somewhat more palatable, a thin slice of nice fat pork was cut down and laid on the cracker, and a spoonful of good brown sugar put on top of the pork, and you had a dish fit for a — soldier. Of course the pork had just come out of the pickle, and was consequently quite raw; but fortunately we never heard of *trichinæ* in those days. I suppose they had not yet been invented. When we halted for coffee, we sometimes had fricasseed hard-tack — prepared by toasting them before the hot coals, thus making them soft and spongy. If there was time for frying, we either dropped them into the fat in the dry state and did them brown to a turn, or soaked them in cold water and then fried them, or pounded them into a powder, mixed this with boiled rice or wheat flour, and made griddle-cakes and honey — minus the honey. When, as was generally the case on a march, our hard-tack had been broken into small pieces in our haversacks, we soaked these in water and fried them in pork fat, stirring well and seasoning with salt and sutler's pepper, thus making what was commonly known as "Hishy-hashy, or a hot-fired stew."

But the great triumph of the culinary art in camp, to my mind, was a hard-tack pudding. This was made by placing the biscuit in a stout canvas bag, and pounding bag and contents with a club on a log, until the biscuit were reduced to a fine powder. Then you added a little wheat flour, the more the better, and made a stiff dough, which was next rolled out on a cracker-box lid, like pie crust. Then you covered this all over with a preparation of stewed dried apples, dropping in here and there a raisin or two, just for "auld lang syne's" sake. The whole was then rolled together, wrapped in a cloth, boiled for an hour or so, and eaten with wine sauce. The wine was, however, usually omitted, and hunger inserted in its stead.

Thus you see what truly vast and unsuspected possibilities reside in this innocent looking three-and-a-half-inch-square hard-tack lying here on my table before me. Three like this specimen made a meal, and nine were a ration; and this is what fought the battles for the Union.

The army hard-tack had but one rival, and that was the army bean. A small white roundish soup bean it was, such as you have no doubt often seen. It was quite as innocent looking as its inseparable companion, the hard-tack, and, like it, was possessed of possibilities which the uninitiated would never suspect. It was not so plastic an edible as the hard-tack, indeed; that is to say, not capable of entering into so many different combinations, nor susceptible of so wide a range of use. but the one great dish which might be made of it was so pre-eminently excellent, that it threw hishy-hashy and hard-tack pudding quite into the shade. This was "baked beans." No doubt bean soup was very good, as it was also very common; but oh, "baked beans!"

I had heard of the dish before, but had never, even remotely, imagined what toothsome delights lurked in the recesses of a camp-kettle of beans, baked after the orthodox backwoods fashion, until one day Bill Strickland, whose home was in the lumber regions, where the dish had no doubt been first invented, said to me, —

"Come round to our tent to-morrow morning; we're going to have baked beans for breakfast. If you will walk around to the lower end of our company street with me, I'll show you how we bake beans up in the country I come from."

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the boys were already busy. They had an immense camp-kettle about two thirds full of parboiled beans. Near by they had dug a hole in the ground, about three feet square and two deep, in which and on top of which a great fire was to be made about dusk, so as to get the hole thoroughly heated and full of red-hot coals by the time *tattoo* sounded. Into this

hole the camp-kettle was then set, with several pounds of fat pork on the top of the beans, and securely covered with an inverted mess pan. It was sunk into the red-hot coals, by which it was completely concealed, and was left there all night to bake, one of the camp guards throwing a log on the fire from time to time during the night, to keep matters agoing.

Early the next morning some one shook me roughly, as I lay sleeping soundly in my bunk.

"Get up, Harry. Breakfast is ready. Come over to our tent. If you never ate baked beans before, you never ate anything worth eating."

I found three or four of the boys seated around the camp-kettle, each with a tin plate on his knee and a spoon in his hand, doing their very best to establish the truth of the adage, that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." Now it is a far more difficult matter to describe the experiences of the palate than of either the eye or the ear, and therefore I shall not attempt to tell the reader how very good baked beans are. The only trouble with a camp-kettle full of this delicious food was, that it was gone so soon. Where *did* it get to, anyhow? It was something like Father Tom's quart of drink, "an irrational quantity, because it was too much for one, and too little for two."

Still, too much of a good thing *is* too much; and one might get quite too much of beans (except in the state above described), as you will find if you ask some friend or acquaintance who was in the war to sing you the song of "The Army Bean." And remember, please, to ask him to sing the refrain to the tune sometimes called "Days of Absence," and to pull up sharp on the last word. —

"Beans for breakfast,
Beans for dinner,
Beans for supper,
BEANS!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

"HATCHER'S RUN."

WHILE we were yet before Petersburg, two divisions of our corps (the Fifth), with two divisions of the Ninth, leaving the line of works at the Weldon Railroad, were pushed out still farther to the left, with the intention of turning the enemy's right flank.

Starting out, therefore, early on the morning of Thursday, October 27, 1864, with four days' rations in our haversacks, we moved off rapidly by the left, striking the enemy's picket line about ten o'clock.

"Pop! pop! pop! Boom! boom! boom! We're in for it again, boys; so, steady on the left there, and close up."

Away into the woods we plunge, in line of battle, through briers and tangled undergrowth, beneath the great trees dripping with rain. We lose the points of the compass, and halt every now and then to close up a gap in the line by bearing off to the right or left. Then forward we go through the brush again, steady on the left and guide right, until I feel certain that officers as well as men are getting pretty well "into the woods" as to the direction of our advance. It is raining, and we have no sun to guide us, and the moss is growing on the wrong side of the trees. I see one of our generals, sitting on his horse, with his pocket compass on the pommel of his saddle, peering around into the interminable tangle of brier and brush, with an expression of no little perplexity.

Yet still on, boys, while the pickets are popping away, and the rain is pouring down. The evening falls early and cold, as we come to a stand in line of battle, and put up breastworks for the night.

We have halted on the slope of a ravine. Minie balls are singing over our heads as we cook our coffee, while sounds of axes and falling trees are heard on all sides; and still that merry "z-i-p! z-i-p!" goes on among the tree-tops, and sings us to sleep at length, as we lie down, shivering under our India-rubber blankets, to get what rest we may.

How long we had slept I did not know, when some one shook me, and in a whisper the word passed around, —

"Wake up, boys! Wake up, boys! Don't make any noise, and take care your tin cups and canteens don't rattle. We've got to get out of this on a double jump!"

We were in a pretty fix indeed! In placing the regiments in position, by some blunder, quite excusable no doubt, in the darkness and the tangled forest, we had been unwittingly pushed beyond the main line, — were, in fact, quite outside the picket line! It needed only daylight to let the enemy see his game, and sweep us off the boards. And daylight was fast coming in the east.

Long after, a company A boy, who was on picket that night, told me that, upon going to the rear somewhere about three o'clock, to cook a cup of coffee at a half-extinguished fire, a cavalry picket ordered him back within the lines.

"The lines are not back there; my regiment is out yonder, in front, on skirmish!"

"No," said the cavalry man, "our cavalry is the extreme picket-line, and our orders are to send in all men beyond us."

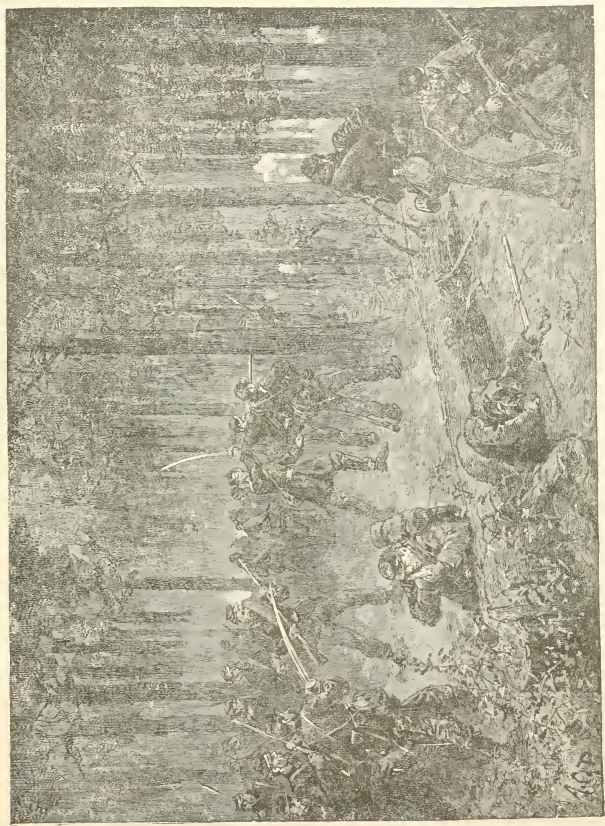
"Then take me at once to General Bragg's headquarters," said the Company A boy.

When General Bragg learned the true state of affairs, he at once ordered out an escort of five hundred men, to bring in our regiment.

Meanwhile, we were trying to get back of our own accord.

"This way, men!" said a voice in a whisper, ahead.

"This way, men!" said another voice in the rear.



THE CONFLICT AT DAYBREAK IN THE WOODS AT HATCHER'S RUN.



That we were wandering about vainly in the darkness, and under no certain leadership, was evident, for I noticed in the dim light that, in our tramping about in the tangle, we had twice crossed the same fallen tree, and so must have been moving in a circle.

And now, as the day is dawning in the east, and the enemy's pickets see us trying to steal away, a large force is ordered against us, and comes sweeping down with yells and whistling bullets, — just as the escort of five hundred, with reassuring cheers, comes up from the rear to our support !

Instantly, we are in the cloud and smoke of battle. A battery of artillery, hastily dragged up into position, opens on the charging line of gray with grape and canister, while from bush and tree pours back and forth the dreadful blaze of musketry. For half an hour the conflict rages fierce and high in the dawning light and under the dripping trees, — the officers shouting, and the men cheering and yelling and charging, often fighting hand to hand and with bayonets locked in deadly encounter, while the air is cut by the whistling lead, and the deep bass of the cannon wakes the echoes of the forest.

But at last the musketry fire gradually slackens, and we find ourselves out of danger.

The enemy's prey has escaped him, and, to the wonder of all, we are brought within the lines again, begrimed with smoke, and leaving many of our poor fellows dead or wounded on the field.

Anxiously, every man looked about for his chum and messmates, lost sight of during the whirling storm of battle in the twilight woods. And I, too, looked ; but where was Andy ?

CHAPTER XXIV.

KILLED, WOUNDED, OR MISSING?

ANDY was nowhere to be found.

All along the line of battle-worn men, now gathered in irregular groups behind the breastworks, and safe from the enemy, I searched for him — and searched in vain. Not a soul had tidings of him. At last, however, a soldier with his blouse sleeve ripped up, and a red-stained bandage around his arm, told me that, about daylight, when the enemy came sweeping down on us, he and Andy were behind neighboring trees. He himself received a ball through the arm, and was busy trying to stop the flow of blood, when, looking up, he saw Andy reel, and, he thought, *fall*. He was not quite sure it was Andy, but he thought so.

Andy killed! What should I do without Andy? — the best and truest friend, the most companionable messmate, that a soldier ever could hope to have! It could not be! I would look farther for him.

Out, therefore, I went, over the breastworks to the picket-line, where the rifles were popping away at intervals. I searched among trees and behind bushes, and called and called, but all in vain. Then the retreat was sounded, and we were drawn off the field, and marched back to the fortifications which we had left the day before.

Toward evening, as we reached camp, I obtained permission to examine the ambulance trains, in search of my chum. As one train after another came in, I climbed up and looked into each ambulance; but the night had long set in before I found him — or thought I had found him. Raising my lantern high, so as to throw the light full on

the face of the wounded man lying in a stupor on the floor of the wagon, I was at first confident it was Andy; for the figure was short, well built, and had raven black hair.

"Andy! Andy! Where are you hurt?" I cried.

But no answer came. Rolling him on his back and looking full into his face, I found, alas! a stranger — a manly, noble face, too, but no life, no signs of life, in it. There were indeed a very low, almost imperceptible breathing, and a faint pulse — but the man was evidently dying.

About a week afterward, having secured a pass from corps headquarters, I started for City Point, to search the hospitals there for my chum. The pass allowed me not only to go through all the guards I might meet on my way, but also to ride free to City Point over the railroad — "General Grant's railroad," we called it.

Properly speaking, this was a branch of the road from City Point to Petersburg, tapping it about midway between the two places, and from that point following our lines closely to the extreme left of our position. Never was road more hastily built. So rapidly did the work advance, that scarcely had we learned such a road was planned, before one evening the whistle of a locomotive was heard down the line, only a short distance to our right. No grading was done. The ties were simply laid on the top of the ground, the rails were nailed fast, and the rolling-stock was put on without waiting for ballast; and there the railroad was — up hill and down dale, and "as crooked as a dog's hind leg." At only one point had any cutting been done, and that was where the road, after climbing a hill, came within range of the enemy's batteries. The first trains which passed up and down afforded a fine mark, and were shelled vigorously, the enemy's aim becoming, with daily practice, so exact, that nearly every train was hit somewhere. The hill was then cut through, and the fire avoided. It was a rough road, and the riding was full of fearful jolts; but it saved thousands of mules, and

enabled General Grant to hold his position during the winter of the Petersburg siege.

I was obliged to make an early start, for the train left General Warren's headquarters about four o'clock in the morning. When I reached the station, I found on the platform a huge pile of boxes and barrels, nearly as high as a house, which I was informed was the Fifth Corps' share of a grand dinner which the people of New York had just sent down to the Army of the Potomac. Before the train arrived I had seen enough to cause me to fear that a very small portion of the contents of those boxes and barrels would ever find its way into the haversack of a drummer-boy. For I had not been contemplating the pile, with a wistful eye, very long, before a certain sergeant came out of a neighboring tent, with a lantern in his hand, followed by two darkies, one of whom carried an axe.

"Knock open that bar'l, Bill," said the sergeant.

Bill did so. The sergeant, thrusting in his hand, pulled out a fat turkey and a roll of butter.

"Good!" said he. "Now let's see what's in that box."

Smash went Bill's axe into the side of the box.

"Good again!" said the sergeant, taking out a chicken, several tumblers of jelly, and a great pound cake, which latter made me feel quite homesick. "Now, Bill," continued the sergeant, "let's have breakfast."

City Point was a stirring place at that time. It was General Grant's headquarters, and the depot of all supplies for the army; and here I found the large hospitals, which I meant to search for Andy, although I scarcely hoped to find him.

Into hospital tents at one end, and out at the other, looking from side to side at the long white rows of cots, and inquiring as I went, I searched long and almost despairingly, until at last — there he was, sitting on his cot, his head neatly bandaged, writing a letter.

Coming up quietly behind him, I laid my hand on his shoulder with, "Andy, old boy, have I found you at last? I thought you were killed!"

"Why, Harry! God bless you!"

The story was soon told. "A clip in the head, you see, Harry, out there among the trees, when the Johnnies came down on us, yelling like demons. All got black before me as I reeled and fell. By and by, coming to myself a little, I begged a man of a strange regiment to help me off, and so I got down here. It's nothing much, Harry, and I'll soon be with you again,—not nearly so bad as that poor fellow over there, the man with the black hair. His is a wonderful case. He was brought in the same day I was, with a wound in the head which the doctors said was fatal. Every day we expected him to die; but there he lies yet, breathing very low, conscious, but unable to speak or to move hand or foot. Some of his company came yesterday to see him. They had been with him when he fell, had supposed him mortally wounded, and had taken all his valuables out of his pockets, to send home. Among them was an ambrotype of his wife and child. Well you just should have seen that poor fellow's face when they opened that ambrotype and held it before his eyes! He couldn't speak, or reach out his hand to take the picture; and there he lay, convulsed with feeling, while tears rolled down his cheeks."

On looking at him, I found it was the very man I had seen in the ambulance, and mistaken for Andy.

Before returning to camp, on the evening train, I strolled along the wharf and watched the boats coming and going, lading and unlading their cargoes of army supplies. A company of colored soldiers was doing guard duty at one point along the wharf. They were evidently proud of their uniforms, and big with importance generally. By and by two officers came leisurely walking toward the wharf, one of whom I at once recognized as General Grant. He was smoking a cigar. As

the two stood on the edge of the wharf, looking up the river and conversing in low tones, one of the colored guards came up behind them and tapped the general on the shoulder.

"Beg pardon, gen'l," said the guard, giving the military salute, "but dere ain't no smokin' allowed on dis yere warf."

"Are those your orders?" asked the general, with a quiet smile.

"Yes, sah; dem's de orders."

Promptly taking his cigar from his lips, the general threw it into the water.

On my return to camp, late in the evening, I found that the comrade with whom I was messing during Andy's absence, had already "turned in" for the night. Leaning upon his elbow on his bunk, as I was stirring up the fire, in order to make a cup of coffee, he said, —

"There is your share of the dinner the New York people sent down to the Army of the Potomac."

"Where?" inquired I, looking around everywhere, in all the corners of the tent. "I don't see it."

"Why, there on your knapsack, in the corner."

On looking toward the spot indicated, I found one potato, half an onion, and the gristly end of a chicken wing!

"You see," continued my messmate, "the New York people meant well, but they have no idea how big a thing this Army of the Potomac is, and they did not stop to consider how many toll-gates their dinner would have to pass in order to reach us. By the time corps, division, brigade, regimental, and company headquarters had successively inspected and taken toll out of the boxes and barrels, there was precious little left for the high private in the rear rank."

CHAPTER XXV.

A WINTER RAID TO NORTH CAROLINA.

ABOUT the beginning of December, 1864, we were busy building cabins for the winter. Everywhere in the woods to our rear were heard the sound of axes and the crash of falling trees. Men were carrying pine logs on their shoulders, or dragging them along the ground with ropes, for the purpose of building our last winter quarters: for of the three years for which we had enlisted but a few months remained. The camp was a scene of activity and interest on all sides. Here were some men "notching" the logs, to fit them firmly together at the corners; yonder, one was hewing rude Robinson Crusoe boards, for the eaves and gables; there, a man was digging clay for the chimney, which his messmate was cat-sticking up to a proper height; while some had already stretched their shelters over rude cabins, and were busy cooking their suppers. Just then, as ill-luck would have it in those uncertain days, an orderly rode into camp with some orders from headquarters, and all building was directed to be stopped at once.

"We have orders to move, Andy," said I, coming into the half-finished cabin, where Andy (lately returned from hospital) was chinking the cracks in the side of the house.

"Orders to move! Why, where in the world are we going this time of year? I thought we had tramped around enough for one campaign, and were going to settle down for the winter."

"I don't know where we're going; but they say the Sixth Corps will relieve us in the morning, and we are to pull out, anyhow."

We were not deceived. At daylight next morning, December sixth, we did "pack up and fall in," and move out from our fortified camp, away to the rear, where we lay all day massed in the woods, with nothing to do but to speculate as to the direction we were to take.

From daylight of Wednesday, December seventh, we marched, through rain and stiff mud, steadily toward the south, crossing the Nottaway River on pontoons at eight P. M., and halting at midnight for such rest as we could find on the cold, damp soil of a cornfield. Next day on again we went, straight toward the south, through Sussex Court House at ten A. M., halting at dusk near the Weldon and Petersburg Railway, about five miles from the North Carolina line.

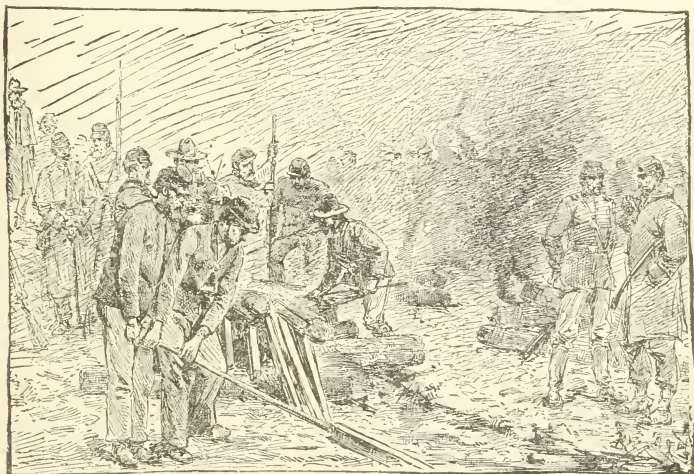
Though we did not then know what all this meant, we soon learned that it was simply a winter raid on the enemy's communications, the intention being to destroy the Weldon road, and so render it useless to him. True, we had already cut that same road near Petersburg, but the enemy still brought his supplies on it from the south, near to the point where our lines were thrown across, and by means of wagons carried these supplies around our left, and safely into Petersburg.

Never was railway more completely destroyed. The morning after we had reached the scene of operations, in the drizzling rain and falling sleet, the whole command was set to work. As far as the eye could see down the road were men in blue, divested of weapons and accoutrements, prying and wrenching and tearing away at iron rails and wooden ties. It was a well-built road, and hard to tear up. The rails were what are known as "T" rails, and each being securely fastened to its neighbor, at either end, by a stout bar of iron or steel, which had been forced into the groove of the T, the track was virtually two long, unbroken rails throughout its whole length.

"No use tryin' to tear up them rails from the ties, major," said an

old railroader, with a touch of his cap. "The plagued things are all spliced together at the j'int's, and the only way to get them off is to pry up the whole thing, rails, ties, and all, and then split the ties off from the rails when you've got her upside down."

So, with fence rails for levers, the men fell to work, prying and heave-I-ho-ing, until one side of the road, ties, track, and all, pulled



WRECKING THE RAILWAY.

and wrenched by thousands of strong arms, began to loosen and move, and was raised gradually higher and higher. Forced at last to a perpendicular, it was pushed over, and laid upside down, with a mighty cheer from the long line of wreckers!

Once the thing was started it was easy enough to roll miles and miles of it over without a break. And so brigade after brigade rolled it along; tearing and splitting off the ties, and wrenching away the rails.

It was not enough, however, merely to destroy the track. The rails must be made forever useless as rails. Accordingly, the ties were piled in heaps, or built up as children build corn-cob houses, and then the heaps were fired. The rails were laid across the top of the burning pile, where they soon became red hot in the middle, and bent themselves double by the weight of their ends, which hung out beyond the reach of the fire. In some cases, however, a grim and humorous conceit led to a more artistic use of the heated rails, for many of them were taken and carried to some tree hard by, and twisted two or three times around the trunk, while not a few of the men hit on the happy device of bending the rails, some into the shape of a U, and others into the shape of an S, and setting them up by pairs against the fences along the line, in order that, in this oft-repeated iron U S, it might be seen that Uncle Sam had been looking around in those parts.

When darkness came, the scene presented by that long line of burning ties was wild and weird. Rain and sleet had been falling all day, and there was frost as well, and we lay down at night with stiff limbs, aching bones, and chattering teeth. Everything was covered with a coating of ice; so that Andy and I crept under a wagon for shelter and a dry spot to lie down in. But the horses, tied to the wheels, gave us little sleep. Scarcely would we fall into a doze, when one of the horses would poke his nose between the wheels, or through the spokes, and whinny pitifully in our ears. And no wonder, either, we thought, when crawling out at daybreak, we found the poor creatures covered with a coating of ice, and their tails turned to great icicles. The trees looked very beautiful in their magnificent frost-work; but we were too cold and wet to admire anything, as our drums hoarsely beat the "assembly," and we set out for a two days' wet and weary march back to camp in front of Petersburg.

Both on the way down and on the retreat, we passed many fine farms or plantations. It was a new country to us, and no other

Northern troops had passed through it. One consequence of this was that we were everywhere looked upon with wonder by the white inhabitants, and by the colored population as deliverers sent for their express benefit.

All along the line of march, both down and back, the overjoyed darkies flocked to us by hundreds, old and young, sick and well, men, women, and children. Whenever we came to a road or lane leading to a plantation, a crowd of darkies would be seen hurrying pell-mell down the lane toward us. And then they would take their places in the colored column that already tramped along the road in awe and wonderment beside "de sodjers." There were stout young darkies with bundles slung over their backs, old men hobbling along with canes, women in best bib and tucker with immense bundles on their heads, mothers with babes in their arms, and a barefooted brood trotting along at their heels; and now and then one would call out anxiously to some venturesome boy, —

"Now, you Sam! Whar you goin' dar? You done gone git run ober by de sodjers yit, you will."

"Auntie, you've got a good many little folks to look after, haven't you?" some kindly soldier would say to one of the mothers.

"Ya-as, Cunnel, right smart o' chilluns I'se got here; but I'se a-gwine up Norf, an can't leabe enny on 'em behind, sah."

Fully persuaded that the year of jubilee had come at last, the poor things joined us, from every plantation along the road, many of them mayhap leaving good masters for bad, and comfortable homes for no homes at all. Occasionally, however, we met some who would not leave. I remember one old, gray-headed, stoop-shouldered uncle who stood leaning over a gate, looking wide eyed at the blue coats and the great exodus of his people.

"Come along, uncle," shouted one of the men. "Come along, — the year of jubilee is come!"

"No, sah. Dis yere chile's too ole. Reckon I better stay wid ole Mars'r."

When we halted at nightfall in a cotton-field, around us was gathered a great throng of colored people, houseless, homeless, well-nigh dead with fatigue, and with nothing to eat. Near where we pitched our tent, for instance, was a poor negro woman with six little children, of whom the oldest was apparently not more than eight or nine years of age. The whole forlorn family crouched shivering together in the rain and sleet. Andy and I thought, as we were driving in our tent-pins, —

"That's pretty hard now, isn't it? Couldn't we somehow get a shelter and something to eat for the poor souls?"

It was not long before we had set up a rude but serviceable shelter, and thrown in a blanket and built a fire in front of them, and set Dinah to cooking coffee and frying bacon for her famishing brood.

Never shall I forget how comical those little darkies looked as they sat cross-legged about the fire, watching the frying-pan and coffee-pot with great eager eyes!

Dinah, as she cooked, and poked the fire betimes, told Andy and me how she had deserted the old home at the plantation, — a home which no doubt she afterward wished she had never left.

"When we heerd dat de Yankees was a-comin'," said she, "de folks all git ready fer to leabe. Ole Mars' John, he ride out de road dis way, an' young Mars' Harry, he ride out de road dat way, fer to watch if dey was a-comin; and den ebbery now an' den one or udder on 'em 'd come a-ridin' up to de house an' say, 'Did ye see anyt'ing on 'em yit? Did ye hear whar dey is now?' An' den one mawning, down come young Mars' Harry a-ridin' his hoss at a gallop, — 'Git out o' dis! Git out o' dis! De Yankees is a-comin'! De Yankees is a-comin'!' and den all de folks done gone cl'ar out an' leabe us all 'lone, an' so when we see de sodjers comin' we done cl'ar out too, — ki-yi!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

“JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME.”

WE had just come out of what is known as the “Second Hatcher’s Run” fight, somewhere about the middle of February, 1865. The company, which was now reduced to a mere handful of men, was standing about a smoking fire in the woods, discussing the engagement and relating adventures, when some one came in from brigade headquarters, shouting the following message — “Say, boys, good news! They told me over at headquarters that we are to be sent North to relieve the ‘regulars’ somewhere.”

Ha! ha! ha! That was an old story, — too old to be good, and too good to be true. For a year and more we had been hearing that same good news, — “Going to Baltimore,” “Going to Washington,” and so forth, and we always ended with going into battle instead, or off on some long raid.

So we didn’t much heed the tidings; we were too old birds to be caught with chaff.

But, in spite of our incredulity, the next morning we were marched down to General Grant’s branch of the Petersburg Railway, loaded on box cars, and carried to City Point, where we at once embarked on two huge steamers, which we found awaiting us.

For two days and nights we were cooped up in those miserable boats. We had no fire, and we suffered from the cold. We had no water for thirty-six hours, and, of course, no coffee; and what is life to a soldier without coffee? All were sea-sick, too, for the weather was rough. And so, what with hunger and thirst, cold, and sea-sickness, we landed one evening at Baltimore more dead than alive.

No sooner were we well down the gang-plank than the crowd of apple and pie women that stood on the wharf made quick sales and large profits. Then we marched away to a "soldiers' retreat" and were fed. Fed! We never tasted so grand a supper as that before or since — "salt horse," dry bread, and coffee! The darkies that carried around the great cans of the latter were kept pretty busy for a while, I can tell you; and they must have thought, —

"Dem sodjers, dar, must be done gone starved, dat's sartin. Nebber seed sech hungry men in all my bawn days, — nebber!"

After supper we were lodged in a great upper room of a large building, having bunks ranged around the four sides of it, and in the middle an open space, which was soon turned to account; for one of the boys strung up his fiddle, which he had carried on his knapsack for full two years, on every march and through every battle we had been in, and with the help of this we proceeded to celebrate our late "change of front" with music and dancing until the small hours of the morning.

Down through the streets of Baltimore we march the next day, with our blackened and tattered flags a-flying, mustering only one hundred and eighty men out of the one thousand who marched through those same streets nearly three years before. We find a train of cars awaiting us, which we gladly enter, making no complaint that we are stowed away in box or cattle cars, instead of passenger coaches, for we understand that Uncle Sam cannot afford any luxuries for his boys, and we have been used to roughing it. Nor do we complain, either, that we have no fire, although we have just come out of a warm climate, and the snow is a foot deep at Baltimore, and is getting deeper every hour as we steam away northward. Toward evening we pass Harrisburg, giving "three cheers for Andy Curtin," as the State Capitol comes in sight. Night draws on, and the boys one by one begin to bunk down on the floor, wrapped in their greatcoats and



THE CHARGE ON THE CAKES.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

blankets. But I cannot lie down or sleep until we have passed a certain way station, from which it is but two miles across the hills to my home. I stand at the door of the car, shivering and chilled to the bone, patiently waiting and watching as village after village rushes by in the bright moonlight, until at long last we reach the well-known little station at the hour of midnight. And then, as I look across the snow-laden moonlit hills, toward the old red farmhouse where father and mother and sisters are all sleeping soundly, with never a thought of my being so near, I fall to thinking, and wondering, and wishing with a bounding heart, as the train dashes on between the mountain and the river, and bears me again farther and farther away from home. Then rolling myself up in my blanket, and drawing the cape of my overcoat about my head, I lie down on the car floor beside Andy, and am soon sound asleep.

The following evening we landed at Elmira, New York, where we were at once put on garrison duty. *Why* we had been taken out of the field and sent to a distant Northern city, we never could discover, and we had seen too much service to think of asking questions which the mysterious pigeon-holes of the War Department alone could answer. But we always deemed it a pity that we were not left in the field until the great civil war came to an end with the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, and that we had no part in the final gathering of the troops at Washington, where the grand old Army of the Potomac passed in review for the last time.

But so it was, that after some months of monotonous garrison duty at Elmira, the great and good news came at last one day that peace had been declared, and that the great war was over! My young readers can scarcely imagine what joy instantly burst forth all over the land. Bells were rung all day long, bonfires burned, and people paraded the streets half the night, and everybody was glad beyond possibility of expression. And among the joyful thousands all over

the land, the Boys in Blue were probably the gladdest of all ; for was not the war over now, and would not " Johnny come marching home ? "

But before we could go home we must be mustered out, and then



THE WELCOME HOME.

we must return to our State capital to be paid off and finally disbanded, and say a last good by to our comrades in arms, the great majority of whom we should never, in all probability, see again. And

a more hearty, rough and ready, affectionate good by there never was in all this wide world. In the rooms of one of the hotels at the State capital we were gathered, waiting for our respective trains. Knapsacks slung, Sharp's rifles at a "right shoulder shift" or a "carry"; songs were sung, hands were shaken, or rather wrung; loud, hearty "God bless you, old fellows!" resounded; and many were the toasts and the healths that were drunk before the men parted for good and all.

It was past midnight when the last camp-fire of the 150th broke up. "Good by, boys! Good by! God bless you, old fellow!" was shouted again and again, as by companies, or in little squads, we were off for our several trains, some of us bound north, some east, some west,—and all bound for home!

Of the thirteen men who had gone out from our little village (whither my father's family had meanwhile removed), but three had lived to return home together. One had already gone home, the day before. Some had been discharged because of sickness or wounds, and four had been killed. As we rode along over the dusty turnpike from L—— to M——, in the rattling old stage coach, that evening in June, we could not help thinking how painful it would be for the friends of Joe Gutelius and Jimmy Lucas and Joe Ruhl and John Diehl to see us return without their brave boys, whom we had left on the field.

Reaching the village at dusk, we found gathered at the hotel where the stage stopped, a great crowd of our schoolfellows and friends, who had come to meet us. We almost feared to step down among them, lest they should quite tear us to pieces with shaking of hands. The stage had scarcely stopped when I heard a well-known voice calling,—

"Harry! Are *you* there?"

"Yes, father! Here I am!"

"God bless you, my boy!"

And, pushing his way through the crowd, my father plunges into the stage, not able to wait until it has driven around to the house ; and if his voice is husky with emotion, as he often repeats, " God bless you, my boy ! " and gets his arm around my neck, is it any wonder ?

But my dog, Rollo, can't get into the stage, and so he runs barking after it, and is the first to greet me at the gate, and jumps up at me, with his great paws on my shoulders. Does he know me ? I rather think he does !

Then mother and sisters come around, and they must needs call for a lamp and hold it close to my face, and look me all over, from head to foot, while father is saying to himself, again and again, " God bless you, my boy ! "

Although I knew that my name was never forgotten in the evening prayer all the while I was away, yet not once, perhaps, in all that time, was father's voice so choked in utterance as when now, his heart overflowing, he came to give thanks for my safe return. And when I lay down that night in a clean white bed, for the first time in three long years, I thanked God for peace and home.

And — Andy ? Why — the Lord bless him and his ! — he's a soldier still. For, having laid aside the blue, he put on the black, being a sober, steady-going Presbyterian parson now, somewhere up in York State. I haven't seen him for years, but when we do meet, once in a great while, there is such a wringing of hands as makes us both wince until the tears start, and we sit up talking over old times so far into the night, that the good folk of the house wonder whether we shall ever get to —

THE END.

